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ABSTRACT

This report evaluates the Supported Study program, study centers designed to facilitate student achievement in elementary and secondary schools in the Strathclyde Region of Glasgow, Scotland. These centers are a place for students to work on their homework before or after school, with adult assistance available. The origins and purposes of supported study in the Strathclyde Region are discussed, and a detailed description of the study centers is presented, including various models of supported study. Several issues related to the implementation of a supported study center are examined, and profiles are given of students who attend, and students who do not attend, the centers. Students, parents, administrators, teachers, and supported study coordinators completed questionnaires about the project, and excerpts from those questionnaires are included in this report. Several indicators of the project's success are outlined, including a growth in student self esteem, more positive attitudes toward school, and improved teacher-student relationships. The report concludes that supported study has been a highly successful initiative. (MM)

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ED 362 259

Learning for Yourself

SUPPORTED STUDY IN STRATHCLYDE SCHOOLS

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John MacBeath

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SUPPORTED STUDY IN STRATHCLYDE SCHOOLS

John MacBeath

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

In August 1990, this evaluation of Supported Study in Strathclyde Region was commissioned. The purpose of the study was to monitor what was happening in the supported study schools within the Region, to assess whether or not they had met the expectations as described in the Region's Strategy Document, and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the operation of the various schemes.

It was decided not to try to conduct a comprehensive coverage of all of the supported study centres, but to select a sample to look at in a little more depth. This original intention became a little compromised as more schools came on stream and the researchers were either invited to come and take a look at what was happening, or were themselves interested in finding out. Therefore, anything up to ten visits per school were paid to twelve schools over a period of two years.

These visits were used mainly to talk to co-ordinators and teachers and to work with, or interview, young people. In three of the schools parents were contacted and invited in for interviews which lasted about half an hour each. In seven of the schools, the following procedures were used:-

- Teachers were given a log to keep over the course of a year noting what they did and describing some of their reactions to events over the course of a session.
- Students completed a log for each session over the course of a year.
- Participating students completed a three-page questionnaire before enlisting in the scheme.
- A sample of non-participating students completed a three page questionnaire.

In sixteen of the schools, teachers completed a questionnaire in September 1992, and in those same schools a comparison was made, where possible, between the Standard Grade and Higher results of students who had participated in supported study on a regular basis, those who had attended only spasmodically, and those who had never attended at all.

A special study was made of one primary school course over 9 weeks (Edinbarnet, Faifley). As well as observation of supported study sessions and monitoring of attendance, interviews were conducted with twenty children, ten parents and three teachers, following a structured format.

Interviews were also conducted with Headteachers, Divisional Co-ordinators, Education Officers, a Chief Adviser and the Senior Depute Director of Education. In addition, considerable documentation was provided by individual schools and the authority.

Three conferences were held - in Glasgow in the summers of 1991 and 1992, and in Ayr in November, 1992. These conferences were sponsored by the Prince's Trust which also has a very strong interest in supported study and is financing a national evaluation of supported study centres in Belfast, London, Liverpool, and Bradford. The evaluation of the Strathclyde schemes has benefited tremendously from close co-operation with the Prince's Trust and the valuable lessons learned from what schools (and non-school supported study centres) in England and Northern Ireland have been doing.

Whether the conclusions of this research are valid will depend less on any statistical evidence than on the judgements of people who have, for the last two years, been involved in supported study whether as teachers, pupils or educational managers. The intention of this study is to give as balanced and fair a picture as possible of what is happening in Strathclyde Region through the eyes of those who have worked most closely with it.

In preparing this report one governing principle has been that some readers may wish to dip into it to refer to specific issues. Some topics are, therefore, addressed in more than one chapter, but from slightly different perspectives.

Research does not, however, simply reflect the intuition or common sense judgements that might be made. Research attempts to be more objective and often contains elements of surprise that challenge common-sense assumptions.

Hopefully, there are some such surprises in this study. Certainly as researchers, our assumptions and preconceptions have been challenged. For example, while the enthusiasm expressed by so many young people for staying on at school to do their homework required a bit of reality testing, and it is easy to get carried away by the euphoria of pupils and teachers, ultimately, supported study will have to be evaluated in terms of a harder currency. In an increasingly lean and stringent educational economy will school policy-makers regard it as a value for money option?

Hopefully this study addresses itself usefully to that question as well.

John MacBeath
Quality in Education Centre
April 1993

CHAPTER 1

SUPPORTED STUDY IN ACTION

In St. Leonard's in Easterhouse the bell goes at a quarter to four and by ten to four most pupils are either well on their way home or already in the house. Inside the school, though, there are still a lot of young people in corridors, apparently not in a hurry to go anywhere. Some are heading for the drop-in centre to play pool or table tennis or just to sit around and chat. Some are waiting for the homework centre to open at 4 o'clock.

Last year the time between school closing and the beginning of homework classes used to be the time in which students could go for a snack, paid for out of the Supported Study budget, but the school has decided to save money in that area and use it to pay directly for staffing of homework classes themselves. Consumer reaction is positive.

> *"It's no big thing. I come here because I like the chance to do my study, not because I was getting a free hamburger and a coke. If I want something to eat I can always get a poke of crisps and you can get a cup of coffee anyway down in the drop in centre if you want."*

By 4 o'clock, there are already about forty young people in the drop-in centre and about thirty in the library where the homework classes are held. Within the next ten minutes that number swells to forty as students arrive in ones and twos from other venues. Tracy and Catherine have come in from college where they are doing SCOTVEC modules. Robert hasn't been at school because he has been away on a trip, but has come in to catch up on his maths. Fiona had run home to get some of the books that she needed to complete a project for next week and she arrives out of breath and late, but still without her books because her mum wasn't in.

At the end of last year they decided to gut the library and make it more of a congenial place for independent study. The linoleum has been replaced by carpeting and the tall book shelves moved from the centre floor space to the periphery. The centre space of the library is now occupied by tables with six chairs around them. The tables have been re-covered to make them more attractive and to brighten up the room. At the back of the room are a number of individual carrels where students can work in greater privacy. Most, though, prefer the social arrangement around a table.

Of the forty pupils attending most are from first and second year, but the whole age range is represented right through to S6. Four of the 6th year girls hope to go on next year to university and welcome the opportunity to get an hour and a half every evening where they can get peace and quiet, mutual support, and help from the teachers in attendance.

There are four teachers, representing a spread of subjects: Modern Studies, Maths, English, and Geography. They are among the seventeen teachers who take their turn on the rota of the classes taking place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. They are paid for their time, but it isn't the money that brings them here, rather the satisfaction they get from seeing young people making such a sustained effort to succeed in adverse circumstances.

Sometimes the teachers stand at a distance and watch what students are doing, but most of the time there is a hand up asking for help or, they have spotted an unspoken need. Often the student has put up their hand just to show off a piece of work and to look for some congratulation. Sometimes they cannot solve the problem and want the teacher to give them the right answer. Teachers will try to resist this and remind them of the purpose of the exercise, which is to help them to become more independent and resourceful learners.

On the basis of their experience over the last couple of years, teachers feel that there are few questions they can't answer, but if there is an advanced question from a senior student then they usually know how to direct that student to get the help they need, or to make a note of what to ask their subject teacher the following day. They stress that their role is less helping out with a specific piece of homework and more trying to help the pupils develop their approach to study and effective learning.

Students are just as likely to turn to their neighbour for help or to give each other help even when it hasn't been requested. Sometimes the pupil who has a hand up will be helped out by another student rather than by the teacher.

While a large number of the young people who are present are doing their homework, some, particularly the older ones, are revising or studying. Chris Nairn, the Supported Study Co-ordinator is keen to develop self-help and study skills material which will help young people to make their learning more effective, and to spend less time on unfocused reading or re-copying notes.

A group of four are sitting around the Apple Mac using a Hypercard package which enables them to explore Glasgow, cross-referencing places of interest with people, dates, and places on the map. The social aspect is as appealing as the technology:

> *"It's a lot more fun than doing it in a book and you learn things better because you are enjoying it and having fun and talking about it wi' your pals."*

The librarian drops by to give them help when the software refuses to take them where they want to go. She is kept busy most of the session directing students to books and to software, and giving a hand when they are stuck with a piece of work.

At 4.45 p.m. the students are told to stop work and take a break. They are reminded that they should be back by 5 o'clock. The purpose is to get students to take more individual responsibility and to pace themselves. Chris Nairn believes that these young people find it difficult, at least in the early years, to impose this structure on themselves. He believes they will learn it but that it has initially to come from the teachers. Students welcome the break and most of them go down to the drop-in centre where they just relax and listen to music, have a quick game of table-tennis, or a cup of tea.

The drop-in centre has eight table tennis tables, four pool tables and two quarter size snooker tables. It has a few sofas and easy chairs, photographs and pop posters on the wall (reminders of when a famous pop group played here), and a bookcase with books and comics. Off the main room is a smaller room with a dining room table and chairs for reading or writing or for a small group discussion. Another room houses easy chairs and has a television set and yet another room is currently being re-furbished to provide a larger resource area.

Cathy, a parent, school cleaner, and a member of the school board, is on hand to look after coffees and teas but also to keep an eye on the centre. She believes a monitoring role is largely redundant because she finds students extremely well behaved.

> *"They really look after the place. There is never any vandalism. They know it's theirs and they* **do** *look after it and don't let anybody make a mess of it. They appreciate what a great thing it is for them because there are not many schools that have this kind of thing."*

The drop-in centre opens at 8.00 a.m. in the morning, at intervals and lunchtimes, and in the evening until 6.00 pm. Willie comes here every evening between 4 and 6 and doesn't go to the homework centre. This is because he is quite happy to do his homework at home, although sometimes he will sit and do it here because he likes to have the music in the background to accompany his work.

Doing homework in the drop-in centre is, however, not encouraged because it could create problems for supervision and tutoring if students started to wander between the two areas. Experience elsewhere suggests that for some young people it is helpful to have clearly demarcated boundaries between an area for work and an area for leisure, and when these two are fudged the work begins to suffer.

At 5 o'clock students head back up to the homework centre and those who are tempted to linger are reminded by their pals that they have to be back by 5 o'clock. Students work from 5.00 until 5.30 pm. The younger ones who have already finished their homework, choose books to read, write stories or poems on the computer, or ask teachers for ideas about what they can do next.

The attendance record is taken and one of the teachers expresses concern about someone who has now missed three consecutive sessions and is known to have been at school during the day. One of the teachers agrees to talk to him the following day and find out why he isn't attending.

At 5.30 most of the students are in no hurry to leave and one or two stay behind to ask questions of the teachers, or just have a chat about the football or the impending school play. The girls who are hoping to go on to university know that they still have work to do when they go home but at least they have taken a good bite out of it, and have been able to get help with some of the things which were posing difficulties. The younger ones set off for home with a sense of freedom with their homework behind them rather than in front of them. Perhaps their mum will have recorded ' Home and Away ' and they can settle down to watch it knowing that the rest of the evening is theirs.

CHAPTER 2

SUPPORTED STUDY - A DEFINITION

Supported study is the term used to describe learning:

- which takes place outwith formal classroom teaching
- is independent and self-directed
- takes place in a setting which is encouraging and motivating to the learner

By this definition supported study could take place almost anywhere, and almost certainly does. For some young people it is in the privacy and comfort of their own room, perhaps to the accompaniment of their own music. For many young people their study is supported by encouragement or help from parents, from older brothers and sisters, from friends, or from private tutors. For many young people in Strathclyde the only form of supported study they know is provided within the school.

What is 'support?'

Supported study rests on a notion which may easily be taken as implicit and obvious - that is, 'support'. This is, however, a very wide and diffuse concept, referring to a number of quite different things, from psychological and emotional support to material props such as books, study aids, or physical space.

It is generally taken as implicit that meaningful learning is only possible when it is supported, and that the most effective kind of learning is imbedded within a complex network of props and backstops. This assumption is almost certainly correct but perhaps needs to be spelled out more explicitly.

Support for learning in the best of possible worlds

In the best of possible worlds a child's sense of self and self-confidence is nourished by a caring parent, or parents. Expectations of self are challenged and there is encouragement to succeed. This is sustained within the school by sensitive and effective teachers who help the child progressively along a path of increasing independence. The child's curiosity and natural instinct for learning are fostered out of school by parents and other adults.

Parents make themselves aware, from the first days of primary 1, of the child's life in school and help her to make sense of that experience. They provide space and time for homework and try to find help from the school or other sources (friends or tutors, books or self-study materials) when she is having difficulty. Parents and teachers, implicitly or explicitly, work from a shared set of values about rewarding success and helping the child to cope with failure and redirect her efforts.

There cannot be many children who grow up in such an ideal, even precious, environment. However, there are many whose growth and learning is sustained by none of these elements. When they experience frustration and failure they are thrown back on their own resources. They do not know where to begin to make sense of, let alone commit to memory, what they are confronted with in the classroom. There is often a powerful disincentive from their peers to be seen to make any effort, and there is no counter force to the lure of something more immediately rewarding. However understanding their parents, the necessary expertise is beyond their resources. However committed their teachers, they are unable to offer their students the individual help they need, and the classroom environment is more often a source of threat than of support.

These insights are not new. They have been eloquently explored by many researchers and writers, most notably perhaps the French sociologist Bordieu. For four decades or more there has been an extensive literature on school failure, and many millions of pounds and dollars have been poured into compensatory programmes. One of the most important lessons to come out of those initiatives is that teachers must recognise the limitations of teaching and become much more sophisticated in their understanding of learning.

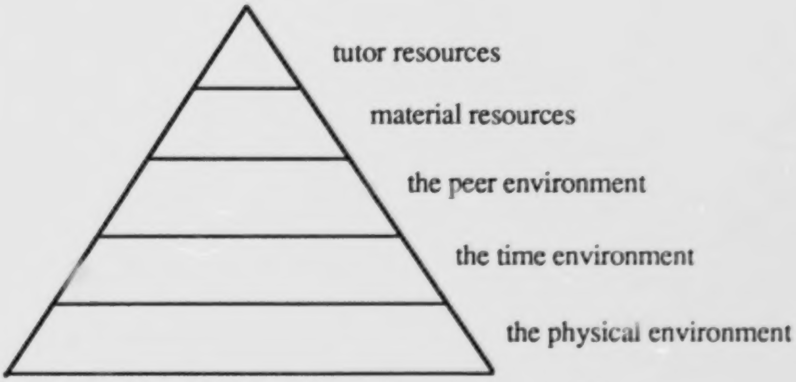
The evidence also tells us that there is one key factor that separates those who succeed and those who don't. It is the ability to sustain responsibility for their own learning. This is driven by a belief in the importance of succeeding and the confidence that it is possible to succeed. With such attitudes to self and to learning the acquisition of self-management and study skills is an attractive and rewarding prospect for the learner and a relatively minor task for the teacher.

However, without that impetus and groundbed of self-belief, study skills and study habits are difficult to acquire and difficult to teach. To offer relevant support to such young people means helping to ground what is being learned in a realistic context, in other words to start from what works for that individual in his or her own social context and domestic niche.

This very sophisticated notion of support characterises the best of supported study schemes, by which it is generally understood that what is on offer is much more than a place to do your homework.

A hierarchy of support

Because support comes in a variety of forms, and because the need for support varies from individual to individual and also varies over time, we may think of supported study in terms of a hierarchy. At the base is the physical environment. Without this nothing else is feasible. Then there is the time environment which is inescapable but may be used and controlled. There is also the peer group whose norms and expectations may work against, or for, you; the material resources which can threaten, but also rescue, you, and there is, at the apex, the resources of a tutor who can ultimately help to make it all work for you.



We can illustrate this by using the analogy of a reading room or study library. In terms of support the physical space may in itself be enough for people whose needs are met simply by having a congenial or quiet space.

The library also works within a strictly controlled time environment, its opening and closing times setting boundaries for learning. There is also the clock, which allows you to place limits on, and to pace, what you are doing, to promise yourself a starting and finishing time, to give yourself a deserved break, or to switch track.

The attraction of the library may also be because of the other people who are there all doing the same thing. It may be described as a 'behaviour setting' that is, the place and the people virtually dictate a certain kind of attitude and a form of conduct from the moment you enter the door.

The value may lie, in addition, in the resources for learning that it offers, resources which are unobtainable elsewhere. Or, it may be that resources in themselves are of little use and that your needs as a learner cannot be met without the expert resources of the librarian to help identify, locate, and provide the appropriate resources for you as an individual.

A library may, exceptionally, offer something even more - the resource of a personal counsellor who is able to help deal with needs that are more psychologically complex than the need for good information.

Supported study centres are in many senses like the study library. Some are good throughout the whole range of support and some less so. Some have, from the planning stage, been designed as a centre which would bring together all those aspects of the physical and psychological environment. Some simply started from what they had - a classroom and a willing teacher - and have gradually developed as the need for a more sophisticated pedagogy was grasped.

We can find validation for this notion of hierarchy of support in the way young people describe their reasons for coming to supported study sessions:

- **It is free from distractions**

For some young people it was an oasis of peace which they couldn't find at home. Just to be free from distractions and counter attractions was a big plus:

> *"It's wonderful, it's so peaceful and calm. Nobody shouts. It's not like school or home"*
>
> *"You cannae get distracted. The phone always goes at home."*
>
> *"You don't get the disruptive elements."*

- **It is a place for work**

Some students emphasised that it encouraged them to work. It supplied not just a place but a set of attitudes to go with it. It was a working environment. It "makes you work".

> *"I need something to make me work. It is just the place, the way it is."*

- **There are books and stuff**

Some young people placed most emphasis on the fact that this was a place where you get books, materials or computers which made school work easier or more rewarding.

> *"You can get things you don't have at home and that makes you feel a wee bit more secure in what you are doing."*
>
> *"Having computers and stuff makes it less of a drag. You enjoy it more because you can do it on the Apple Mac and see it nicely printed an' that"*

- **There are teachers to help you**

Some pupils, who normally did homework before the existence of after school classes appreciated particularly the quality of help from teachers:

> *"I don't mind working at home, but the thing I like most is that teachers here seem to understand more and help you more than in the classroom. They are more sympathetic to you if you cannae understand anything."*
>
> *"If you get stuck you can talk it out with them. At home you'd just be getting stuck and all frustrated."*

Support is an active process

Support is an active process that may easily pass for a passive one. Tutors may at times appear to be doing very little, but watching, listening, and monitoring are important aspects of the job. They are also sending out messages to young people, perhaps through their body language which can signal that they are available and receptive.

> *"A youngster looks up and she sees something about the way you are, maybe just the way you are standing or holding yourself, and she feels she can signal you over or come and approach you. I suppose it is like the social signal at parties ... I am interested."*

What tutors can do

- free young people from distractions
- ensure a comfortable motivating environment
- identify, or create, useful books/study guides
- set boundaries for behaviour
- be alert to when help is needed
- have patience
- offer encouragement
- structure learning and help to set targets
- encourage self-assessment
- reward progress and achievement
- get to know the young person as an individual
- share something of themselves as people
- be available and willing to listen
- suspend judgement

Support for the teacher

In evaluating supported study it is easy to focus on the learner and forget the teacher. Yet support for the teacher may ultimately prove to be the most crucial factor.

Some teachers get little or infrequent satisfaction out of normal classroom teaching. They find it unrelieved and stressful and do not get much support from colleagues who have their own battles to fight. To persist in the job and to do so with some degree of enthusiasm they need some reward, some signal of progress, and some relationship with young people which goes beyond the coercive and controlling. The Strathclyde schemes appear to have offered to many teachers an opportunity to teach, or work with, young people in a way which is positively energising and motivating, and indeed also offers them support.

> *" I don't know about them but it's certainly done me a hell of a lot of good."*
>
> *"For me it's the most rewarding bit of the job. I sometimes think this is what I came into teaching for."*

CHAPTER 3

SUPPORTED STUDY - ITS ORIGINS AND PURPOSES IN STRATHCLYDE REGION

Supported study was one of those ideas whose time had come. The credit for sowing the seeds of the idea is claimed by a number of people but its realisation in practice is owed to officers and members in the Region who, in a time of severe cutbacks in educational spending ring-fenced a sum of money to be spent solely on this initiative.

In 1990 a working party - known as the Poverty Officers' Group - submitted to the Regional Council a strategic framework and practical initiatives for combating poverty in Strathclyde. That report described the scale and the growth of poverty in the Region, and the effects of the 1988 changes in the Social Security System. It noted:

- the doubling in the last decade of the numbers of people living in poverty
- the growing gap between wage earners and people dependent on state benefit
- the increasing proportion of single parents
- the concentration in pockets of extreme poverty

In this context it is unrealistic to have grandiose aims, and the Officers' Group identified two central purposes to the anti-poverty strategy. They might be seen as short, and long-term, goals:

- to improve the living conditions of those who are poor or are likely to be in the future

- to attempt to minimise the extent of poverty in the future

The Officers' Group came up with 13 initiatives through which to achieve those goals. These included projects on job training, creche facilities, consumer rights, and credit unions. The most ambitious and costly of the thirteen initiatives was called Supported Study Schemes.

In the proposal that went before the full Council in July 1990 the areas which Supported Study Schemes should address were described in the following terms:

- opportunities to consolidate school work through homework and supported study
- provision of specific classes in Science and Technology
- provision for pupils in S3-6 in schools serving areas of priority treatment
- some classes for pupils in S1/2 and in a primary school and a Compact area
- support staff to work with children who might benefit but don't initially participate
- support staff to work with SILOS (Schools Industry Liaison Officers) and careers staff to identify benefits of the scheme
- the use of non-school premises and non-school teaching staff to be explored
- classes to be run for approximately one and half hours four evenings a week between 3.30 and 5.00

The success of the schemes would be measured by:

- the extent of uptake by APT pupils
- increases in attainment
- increases in employment

The costs were estimated as £24 per one and half hour class, in other words the salary of one teacher. If a school were to employ ten teachers per evening for one and a half hours four days a week for 40 weeks this would cost about £38,400 per school. If the Region were to repeat this in ten schools the overall sum would be approaching £400,000.

To provide this level of finance for 'homework classes' (as they were commonly perceived) was by no means an obvious way to combat poverty. The connection between the two was, on the face of it, a tenuous one. People within social and community work, housing, and health services could advance more compelling cases for direct action whose effects would be observable and measurable in the short run.

The decision was, therefore, a delicate one especially since it was taken in the context of the school closures and the cut-backs necessary to finance extensive underpayment of the poll tax. However, there is an irresistible logic in the argument put forward by the Region:

> You cannot justify an educational system which requires that students do work out of school, without discriminating against those who are already discriminated against.
>
> The exam system increasingly takes it as implicit that individual learning should take place outwith the classroom.

Moving it forward

The initiative having been taken, the Senior Depute Director of Education, David McNeill and Chief Adviser, Brian Boyd, visited schools to talk to school boards and to head teachers, trying to sketch the parameters within which the initiative would operate. It was intended to avoid being too prescriptive and to allow maximum freedom for individual schools to develop their own approach. Since such an initiative had never run before it would have been difficult for senior staff to be prescriptive in any case and at that stage there was little more than an act of faith that supported study would work.

The message to the school from the authority may be summarised as follows:

- We have an idea which we would like you to implement. There is money to do this and your school has been suggested. It is up to you whether or not you wish to be involved.
- We are not going to tell you how to do this. You know your own circumstances and your own people
- Select teachers whom you judge relate well to children. Don't ask for volunteers

The message was more about values than about procedures. The values were that supported study should as far as possible try to replicate the conditions in a good home. There should be a friendly and relaxed ambience, availability of resources such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, computers, and access to an adult. The characteristics of the teacher should be, as far as possible, those of a caring parent.

It was to be explicitly for those young people who did not receive that kind of support at home. Since it would be an attempt to help many who were not doing well in class, it was not going to be useful to subject them to more of what they had already failed at. Many of them would be the invisible children whose needs only become visible in a different kind of environment and with a different kind of adult relationship.

Some implications for practice flowed from this. Supported study should not be about the extension of teaching. It would require a different kind of environment from the classroom. For example, if a student was undertaking a geography project whose aim was to encourage independent learning and independent research, it might not be helpful to have a geography teacher there because both child and teacher might want to concentrate on the subject matter rather than the approach to it. It is might be more useful to have an independent tutor who could help the child focus on approach and methodology rather than content.

David McNeill offers the following analogy:

> "Few children have parents who are higher level physicists and they can't expect their parents to help them with their homework. But good parents can help with the frustration and the anxiety and talk to their children about how to get the help they need."

The message to schools from the Directorate was also that this was 'different time'. It was children's free time. They were entitled to be out of school and, in a sense, teachers were trespassing on their time. It was, of course also different time for teachers and that had to be recognised. They should, therefore, be paid, not for extra teaching, but for making themselves available during the hours between 4 and 5.30.

A difference of interpretation

The lack of any tight prescription led to varying interpretations and understandings among schools of what was and what wasn't admissible. Some schools took the message that it was to be a complete hands-off approach, allowing supervision and, at a pinch, some individual tuition, but certainly no teaching. Others interpreted support and consolidation of school work to include direct help and explanation, even if this meant after-hours teaching of a class of twenty.

The religious attempt to avoid any suggestion that there was 'teaching' may well stem from a worry within the school itself that this might be seen as preferential and divisive, and lead to complaints from parents.

The wide variety of perceptions from school to school is probably attributable to the messages coming from a number of sources. Initiatives were carried forward to some extent by Divisional Co-ordinators and Education Officers who had their own interpretations of how the exercise should work. On occasions, it would appear that they gave conflicting and contradictory advice to headteachers. Headteachers also had strong ideas of their own about how it should be implemented and could, if they chose, capitalise on the contradictory messages and go their own way.

The main areas of confusion were to do with:

- targeting
- the role of teachers
- spending

In some schools it was assumed that pupils from non-APT areas should not be allowed to participate. Others made no such distinction and instead of targeting individual pupils or families targeted year groups. One school targeted fourth year only, and another managed to include the whole of sixth year comprising about twenty pupils:

> *"We made them an offer they couldn't refuse."*

In one school the headteacher identified a group of pupils he thought would benefit and having got their interest suggested they might like to bring their pals along. His reasoning was that building a social group from the ground up would be more likely to guarantee sustained commitment. A year later that hunch appeared to be justified by a high level of regular attendance.

There was also confusion over who should supervise, or teach, supported study. At least one headteacher had got the message that it should be community volunteers rather than teachers, and had pursued this avenue with a low degree of success and a high degree of frustration. Few schools have involved people other than teachers within the school itself. Auchinleck Academy, who joined the scheme in school year 1992-93, is using college of education students and senior school students. Doon Academy uses parents. In Dumbarton, tutors from the Voluntary Tutors Organisation work with children in some of the primary schools. They are supported and advised by primary school teachers who, in turn, get help and training from the Psychological Services.

On their own initiative some schools appointed co-ordinators while others didn't. Some co-ordinators were 'fingered' by the headteacher while others applied, were interviewed and selected. One school was so impressed by two applicants that it appointed both as co-ordinators. In some schools co-ordinators were paid extra, while in some schools they weren't.

Probably the great source of ambiguity was over finance. The message from the Directorate was that schools should apply for finance as they saw the need and every application would be treated on its merits. No floor or ceiling was put on this, it was simply an open offer.

Some schools took every advantage of this offer while some did not apply for any money over and above staff salaries and catering. In terms of equipment and furnishing in particular this led to some quite sharp disparities among schools. This took some time to come to light because there was little cross-fertilisation, at least not across divisional boundaries. The disparities in resourcing appeared to be largely due to how spending was interpreted at divisional level, and the extent to which it was actively encouraged or discouraged at that level.

Cross-fertilisation did not occur much across divisional boundaries, mainly because of the commitment and work involved in running the scheme within school, and the effort each needed to keep that afloat. The extent of these differences did not surface until schools came together at a Glasgow conference in June 1991. That forum provided not only an exchange of ideas but also some surprises when it was seen how other schools had gone about supported study, and how they had spent their money. The Chief Adviser who was present at that meeting tried to reiterate and make plain the Regional position as far as application for money was concerned. That is, schools who had applied for no money up to that point should have done so and could still do so. The failure to do so hitherto appeared to lie in some cases with lack of information at the level of individual schools and in other cases with a blockage at the level of the Divisional Office.

CHAPTER 4

GROWING FROM THE ROOTS

In the early days supported study schemes were left more or less to their own devices and allowed to develop their own way of working. The great strength of this was in the ownership that it allowed individual head teachers or development teams. Those with ideas, enthusiasm, and an ability to grasp the opportunity found it a rewarding experience. The singular weakness of the approach, though, was revealed in schools which were more tentative, or less inclined to do the preliminary groundwork.

The benefits

There can be few educational innovations which have given so much latitude to individual schools and to teachers. This initiative also came at a period in Scottish education when teachers were feeling at their most put upon. From the teacher point of view there seemed to be a rolling conveyer belt of reforms coming at them from a national and local authority level - Standard Grade, Revised Higher Grade, School Boards, Staff Development and Appraisal, School Development Planning, and the 5-14 implementation programme. For many teachers this was seen as an undermining or deskilling process:

> *"Morale in this school hit rock bottom about a year ago. People were saying if there was a job in Safeway they'd take it tomorrow. You just spend your life trying to interpret and fit into something new, something else dreamed up a million miles away from the classroom ."*

Supported study, by contrast, offered an opportunity for teachers to plan, develop, execute, experiment, evaluate and reformulate. It was *their* scheme and they had a strong investment in its success. Although this came on top of everything else, and might have been seen as yet more work for teachers, it seems, ironically, to have had the opposite effect, that is, of raising morale and of making the 'other things seem less daunting. In short, supported study has proved to be a highly effective form of staff development.

The weaknesses

Some head teachers had a clear and personal vision of what supported study could achieve and how it could be organised. In some cases they had thought about, and even dreamed about, it for years. They put it high on their priority list and had a deep attachment to its success. On the other hand there were other head teachers who had neither thought about it before nor were sure where to begin. They did not see it as among their most pressing priorities and when it came to implementation they approached it pragmatically.

An example from two schools illustrates this point:

> In school A planning got underway three months before the scheme was to begin. The local authority adviser put in a lot of time with the headteacher in planning and consulting as widely as possible. They talked to, and spent time with, anyone who had ideas or could offer support. They set up a planning and advisory committee with pupils and teachers. They investigated finance - refurbishing of premises? hardware and software? and looked to a range of alternatives for their money - alternative centres, times, and client groups. They decided to start small and to build from there. After discussing it with the School Board they invited in parents to explain the scheme to them. For the first three months the headteacher and adviser spent most evenings themselves working with pupils and staff. They monitored the scheme and followed up pupils whose attendance began to flag. By the end of the year about 80% of the students were still regular attenders.
>
> In school B volunteer staff were recruited to offer after-school sessions. A tannoy announcement invited anyone interested in supported study to come to a lunchtime meeting. A very large number of pupils of all ages attended. The school tried to match classes with teachers and had a very large turnout on the first few evenings. By the second week numbers had dropped to half.

Some schools got off to a bad start and, after their first year, were ambivalent about the success of the project or the investment of time and effort. For example, one school which started in their first week with well over a hundred pupils had, by the end of the year, a core group of less than a dozen. The staff themselves acknowledged that this reflected a lack of planning, and a lack of adequate research and marketing before the project started.

The degree of success of different schemes may also be put down to the way in which they were presented to parents and to pupils, and made known in the wider community.

Some schools had been successful in enlisting parental interest from the start, running parents' meetings to explain the scheme or having open evenings at which parents could visit study areas with students on hand to serve tea and coffee and explain the mysteries of supported study.

More than fifty parents turned up to an evening meeting in St. Leonard's on study skills, not because study skills was a topic likely to entice anyone from a good evening's television but because staff "leaned heavily" on the students to bring their parents along.

The question of whom supported study was for, and whom it was not for, had to be approached with some sensitivity, and some schools had difficulty in knowing how to handle this. Some schools, having decided that supported study should be for the most deprived families, were then faced with a difficult decision of how to explain this to the School Board, and at least one school got off to a shaky start by being too literal with parents and describing the scheme as an "anti-poverty initiative."

The most rational and publicly acceptable criterion for targeting was children who were in large families and who would have least peace and space in which to pursue their study. Other schools got round this by targeting the whole of a year group. Making the scheme open to everyone, as some schools did, appears to have been less successful, at least in terms of attendance and continuity, than those with a tightly focused group which could be targeted and monitored.

Learning from mistakes

Even in the schools which got off to the least successful start, there was, by the end of the second year, a much greater enthusiasm and confidence in the scheme. This can be put down to learning by trial and error, and to a large extent taking on board the lessons from other schools.

After the experience of their first year some significant changes were made. The turn around in the fortunes of supported study schemes can be put down in most instances to the appointment of a co-ordinator, or re-examination of his/her role.

The role of the co-ordinator

Not all schemes began with co-ordinators. Those who introduced a co-ordinator after the start of the scheme wondered how they could have done without one.

The co-ordinator is a key figure. A good co-ordinator can do a lot to make or break an initiative. The most successful co-ordinators appeared to be those with a translucent enthusiasm for supported study and a determination to make it succeed. They put in hours over and above what they were being paid for. They were never content with the status quo, always feeling they could do better. They had a vision, optimism, and high expectations of what even the poorest student could achieve.

Some co-ordinators had an almost evangelical zeal for the project, but it was, in the words of one teacher:

> *"A great asset to combine all that gung ho enthusiasm with the ability to organise things efficiently."*

A GOOD CO-ORDINATOR

- has a commitment to the success of the scheme
- monitors attendance and progress
- keeps people informed about the scheme
- liaises with other schools
- provides feedback to tutors, headteacher, parents, pupils
- regularly reviews progress with staff
- is open to, and looks out for, new ideas
- evaluates and involves tutors and pupils in that process
- seeks out support and consultancy (e.g. local authority, colleges, other schools)
- examines ways of making supported study an integral aspect of whole school policy and practice

CHAPTER 5

MODELS OF SUPPORTED STUDY

The growth of supported study from the grass roots means that there are no two schemes which are identical and, at the extremes, there are marked differences. These differences are more about implementation than philosophy and reflect local circumstances and local issues. It is undeniable, though, that they are also underpinned by some differences in belief and educational persuasion.

In terms of operational detail we may distinguish the following kinds of differences:

Open or closed?

One fundamental feature of supported study is the people for whom it is intended. Is it open to all comers or for a specific group? There are schemes in other parts of the country which are open to anyone who wants to come (for example, Belfast and Liverpool) but in Strathclyde the common model has been to provide sessions for specific groups of pupils.

Another dimension of the Strathclyde model is the implicit, or explicit, contract of attendance. Those who attend sessions attend for the whole session. By contrast, in St. Gemma's in Belfast the school is open from 6 till 9 and pupils sign themselves in and out and may stay anything between 10 minutes and 3 hours.

The degree of openness is related to pressure for places. Where there is pressure for places it is seen as unfair for students to take up a place and then not use it to the full.

Homework or study?

Supported study sessions are commonly referred to as 'homework classes'. Some are in fact just that and their main function is to provide a place for young people to do their homework in peace and with help from adults. Some actively discourage homework and see their function more in terms of helping to develop self-management and study skills. Some schemes offer a mixture of different options.

Directed or undirected?

What students do when they are there may be quite tightly structured or they may be left to their own devices. In some schemes, for example Port Glasgow, it is a rule that homework is done first. In St. Stephen's S1 and S2 students move from tutor to tutor who run structured discussion and activity sessions. In Edinbarnet Primary students choose two out of eight options -including cookery, gardening, French, video making, and technology.

In some there are few restrictions and it is possible for students to sit and chat without being pressured to work. In others, Doon Academy for example, students are free to manage their own time but are expected to split their leisure and study time about one third to two thirds.

Formal or informal?

A visitor to different schemes might be struck by the degree of similarity to daytime classes or by the totally different atmosphere. In some cases there are twenty pupils in a classroom all working in silence or listening to the teacher explaining something at the blackboard. In others pupils are sitting, 'lounging' on easy chairs, chatting, sometimes listening to music or drinking coffee while they work .

Work and leisure

Supported study is seen by some as a concentrated period of work without distractions. In other cases leisure opportunities were available, so that it would not only be more attractive, but so that young people could learn how to balance their use of time. In Doon Academy this was slightly modified as the scheme took shape, but flexibility was preserved so that over the period of a three hour session up to a third of that time could be spent playing table tennis, watching television or listening to music. By contrast, in St. Leonard's young people have to make the choice between leisure and supported study on any given evening but they could, say, choose to play snooker two nights a week and attend supported study for one, or vice-versa.

In Waverley in Drumchapel five-a-side football was organised for S1/2 for the second half of the evening, since there was not enough homework to occupy them for two hours, and uptake was low. 50% of boys and girls in S1/2 turned up when the football was on, but when it was stopped ("because it violated the guidelines" in the words of the headteacher) the attendance rate dropped to 7%.

Subject-based or generic?

Many of the Strathclyde schemes are subject-based. That is, supported study is offered in specific subjects and students opt to come for a Maths, French or Music session, for example. They normally go to the relevant classroom where there is a specialist teacher of that subject. In some schemes they may opt to split the session half and half between, say, Maths and Music. In generic schemes no specific subject expertise is on offer. Although teachers are there to support study in a generic sense, they usually do try to help with subject-based problems.

Supported study or learning support?

'Learning support' has acquired a special definition, referring to help for children with special educational needs, or associated with the work that is done by the learning support teacher. Some schools have been careful to make the distinction between study support and learning support. In others, though, learning support has played an integral role in the initiative. In Campbeltown Grammar, for example, the learning support specialist played a central role in running the scheme and the learning support base was used as part of the supported study accommodation.

Given that many young people who attend supported study do so because they have social and/or learning difficulties it would seem that learning support specialists have an important part to play. In Campbeltown it was seen as highly successful not only in its primary objective of providing immediate help for students, but also in destigmatising learning support and increasing its usage and status in the school as a whole.

When, where, who and how?

When?

Some schemes open in the evening say from 6 till 9. Some open in the late afternoon, for example from 4 to 5.30. In some, Edinbarnet for example, there was in the first year a series of sessions - 3.30 till 5.00 for primary children, 5.00-6.00 for individual tutoring and 7.00 to 9.00 for secondary age students.

Most centres have done some market research on the most suitable times, and the large majority have opted for after-school sessions, typically 4.00 to 5.30. This allows for a short break after school followed by a concentrated hour and a half. In the case of first year pupils this can be too long unless there is something specific for them to do. The option for pupils to leave when they want is generally not favoured because it may begin to fray the commitment and be an unsettling influence on those left behind.

The inertia factor plays an important role, favouring staying at home once there, or once at school simply staying on there. Teachers tend to prefer afternoon sessions for much the same reasons, especially when compounded by living a long distance from the school. Parents also tend to prefer afternoon sessions because they worry about the trip to and from school after dark.

How long?

Most favour starting up soon after the return from the summer break, around the beginning of September. At the other end some stop at Easter and few run on past May, as enthusiasm begins to dwindle when the long evenings and good weather arrive.

Who is it for?

Who is supported study for? It covers the wide range of ages, from primary 6 to secondary 6. In terms of cost benefits some see its greatest impact being on fourth and fifth year students preparing for exams who clearly benefit from support at a critical time. On the other hand, it is argued that good habits start early and that it is in S1 and 2 that the foundations of success are laid. Primary schools argue that good habits are laid even earlier, and in Campbeltown primaries 6 and 7 are involved. The experience of an enthusiastic reception from primary 7 in Edinbarnet led them to extend it the following year to primary 6, again with a positive response from students and parents.

Targeting, and the rationale for targeting, varies from school to school. Some schools have restricted it to one or two year groups. Some have started with one group and built from there. In Doon Academy, for example, in its first year of operation, supported study was open to fourth year only, but having tested the water the scheme was then expanded in year two to include the upcoming fourth year as well as those from the previous year by now in fifth. The supported study grew with its clientele.

In some the targeting has been in terms of priorities of need, using, for example free school meals , or the number of children in the house as an index.

Schemes are also different in terms of separation and mixing of age groups. Some see the virtues of older and younger students mixing - crossing traditional barriers and developing alliances. Some find it less disruptive, easier to offer tuition, and to roster staff when there is a single age group.

Different Strathclyde Models

	Time	Age Group	Duration	Format	Tutors
St. Leonard's Easterhouse	4.00-4.45 5.00-5.30	S1-6 Mixed groups	Sept-May	Homework plus study	4 teachers
Doon Academy Dalmellington	6.30-9.00	S4-6	Oct-May	Supported Study	3 teachers 2 parents
St.Columba's Clydebank	3.30-5.00	S1-2 Revised Higher	Oct-June	Learning Support Exam prep.	4 teachers
Edinbarnet Faifley	4.00-5.30 5.30-6.30	P6-7 VTOs	Sept -May	Activity options Individual help	4 teachers 6 tutors
Campbeltown Grammar	3.30-5.00	P6-7 S1-2	Oct-April	Homework Supp. Study	4 teachers

Testing the market

Schools which had done market research before launching their initiative clearly benefited from that prior knowledge. However, the problem with market research is that people don't always know what they want until they've tried it. Although evening sessions don't look too appealing on the face of it, many young people have, in practice, preferred them to after school sessions. There were advantages and disadvantages to both. Some students say that they are tired directly after school but refreshed by evening. Some want to "get it over with" and have found that once home it needed a special effort to go back to school.

Which is the best buy?

From the wide range of models on display which appears to be the best buy? Because people have developed their own models and found them to be popular and successful there tends, perhaps, to be a tenacious belief that theirs is the best way of doing things. In some cases a post hoc theory is developed to fit the practice.

On every dimension of supported study described above there are proponents of one modus operandi over another. There are advocates of the subject-based as against the generic approach, afternoon as against evening, younger as against older pupils, or the formal as against the informal. These different arguments are worth considering.

The value of the classroom environment

Some teachers argue that it is the classroom environment that produces a positive attitude to work. It is, in sociological parlance, a "behaviour setting", that is, when you walk into the classroom it says "sit down at a desk and do some work." They go further to argue that easy chairs, music or a more relaxed environment encourage a more relaxed but less concentrated attitude to work. Some students agree with this thesis. Some disagree. Usually their position reflects the situation that they are most used to,

Some teachers argue that the comfortable environment of easy chairs and carpets is good because it establishes a different environment from the classroom, and that students enjoy it more because it is closer to the relaxed environment of their home.

In fact, this does not appear to be an either/or question but a horses-for-courses question. It depends on the purpose of the activity and on the individual learning style of the student. In other words, some students welcome and need the classroom environment, or at least do at specific times. Others find it off-putting and don't want to return to 'more of the same'.

However, the value of being able to use the subject classroom and its resources is clearly valuable in some situations:

> *"The other day we were going to have a Home Eccie exam. Some of us came into practise during supported study time. It was great because we got to practise using all the stuff, the piping bags and everything. It means that we knew what we were doing when it came to the exam."*

Whatever the location within the school there was general agreement that being in the school itself predisposes you to work:

> *"It is a good idea for studying because it is more easy to study in a school atmosphere."*

The value of subject teachers

Perhaps the strongest benefit of being in the school is the availability of subject teachers so that expert help can be offered in a subject in which the student is having difficulty.

Where that teacher is the same teacher as during the day there is valuable continuity from class to supported study, and from supported study back into the classroom.

On the other hand, some students saw it as a positive feature that they met a different teacher who brought a different perspective to the subject or topic. Some brought a different methodology, and some a different style of relating to young people.

One argument for not having subject teachers but rather support tutors, was that a positive virtue was to be gained from in students having to find resources for their own learning, rather than falling back on being taught.

Once again, this is not necessarily an either or question, since schemes can encompass a variety of approaches. Some do combine the option of subject-based study with tutorial support. In schemes which offer no subject-based study some students choose to attend sessions where specific subject teachers are on duty.

In schemes with large numbers of students, and therefore of teachers, the available subject expertise can be widened. The addition of senior students as tutors also serves to widen the available expertise.

Whether teachers teach the subject with which students want help or whether they are there as generic tutors seems a less relevant consideration than how they relate to students as young people. It is the opportunity to meet them as people that students appear to value most.

> *"Teachers are more relaxed. You discover they have a sense of humour. That helps you to talk to them and ask them questions more easily."*

Good times and bad times

There are also strong advocates of the evening over the afternoon session and vice-versa as there are views of preferred evenings. It is taken as implicit that weekends are out and no Strathclyde scheme runs on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Most run three or four evenings a week.

In schools which run afternoon sessions it is typically agreed that evening sessions wouldn't work. On the other hand, in Doon Academy which started with afternoon sessions and evening sessions, they moved in their second year of operation to evening sessions only. The following was a typical of the kind of comment made by young people in Doon Academy who had tried both:

> *"I much prefer the evening 'cos when I get home I'm really knackered and I just want to flake out for a while and watch the telly. You get school out of your system and by the time half six comes you're ready to go back."*

Nor do there appear to be good evenings and bad evenings. In Castlemilk High Thursday is most popular, whereas in St. Margaret Mary's half a mile away it is least popular. Particular subjects on offer on any evening are an influential factor, with some subjects being more heavily subscribed than others. Maths and English are generally popular, plus other subjects which have a particular appeal because of the teacher or the way they are taught. In St. Margaret Mary's, for example, Music is a popular option.

Television, or the absence of it, does not appear to a major constraining factor. The great majority of young people said they were regular followers of *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* but were either willing to forego that pleasure or arranged to have the programmes recorded for them. *Top of the Pops* was a counter attraction on a Thursday evening but didn't seem to be a major constraint in schools with evening sessions. One school which recorded and replayed this for pupils at break time found that a lot of young people didn't bother once they were engrossed in their work.

The nature of the area, geography and the proximity of the school to its neighbourhoods, local culture and tradition, all play an important part and it seems that what works in X does not necessarily work in Y. For example, whether and when young people are likely to attend will be influenced by

- rival attractions such as recreational and leisure facilities
- street culture
- peer group pressure
- staff pressure
- after-school work
- domestic commitments
- travel

CHAPTER 6

SUPPORTED STUDY IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

When the Regional initiative began Dunbarton Division chose to fund 5 primary schools. The Dunbarton model was that each school should select ten to twelve pupils from primary 7 who might benefit most from the opportunity for after school work. In fact, schools tended to ask for interested pupils then ballot for places, offering a second chance later in the year to those on the waiting list.

Primary schools took a different path from the secondaries, largely because homework, or study, could not have been sustained for an hour or hour and a half after school. Rather, they chose to offer activities which would support and extend learning more generally. A wide range of activities was developed including drama, arts, games, technology, interpersonal skills, and, in Kilbowie Primary, a newspaper room which came close to replicating the atmosphere of a newspaper office.

Edinbarnet in Faifley followed this model for their first year of operation, but on the evidence of how well it had worked with primary 7 the headteacher asked the Region if she could, in year two, extend supported study to primary 6.

In 1992 the scheme was run for nine weeks of the summer term with all of primary 6 pupils. At the invitation of the headteachers, the researchers observed and participated in these sessions, talked to teachers, pupils and their parents.

The main purposes of the primary 6 supported study initiative were:

- to raise the self-esteem of the pupils
- to foster personal relationships between teachers and pupils
- to encourage social interaction with peers and adults
- to encourage children to accept responsibility for their actions
- to develop oral language skills
- to encourage good manners and politeness
- to raise the self-confidence of pupils
- to engender motivation in pupils so that they would participate and learn through the project.
- to create a happy, relaxed and caring environment
- to ensure that the project was an enjoyable experience for both tutors and pupils through active learning.

There were eight activities from which pupils could choose. Each child nominated four from which two were selected. Children were asked to make this choice together with their parents, and parents were sent a letter explaining the purpose and organisation of the scheme. They were asked to sign an undertaking to encourage their children to attend and to work hard, and that they would take responsibility for their children's journey home from school at 4.30.

Once this was agreed pupils spent four weeks on each of the two activities, with the ninth week being set aside for a party for all those "who had attended well and worked hard." Attendance was 100% and participation in the various activities virtually 100% as well. (based on the researcher's observation of 'on task' behaviour)

When parents were asked whose decision it was each said that it was their child' s decision:

> *"It was nothing to do wi' me. He just wanted to."*

Nor was there much evidence of peer pressure either way:

> *" He didn't go 'cos of his pals, he just wanted to go anyway."*

When it came to choice of activities most parents had discussed it with their children and helped them choose:

> *" We chose two practical subjects and two 'fun' things. I chose the practical ones."*

Of the twenty children interviewed all were positive, most overwhelmingly so, about the experience. The following are some of their comments:

Technology

> *"My first day at Technology. I didn't want to leave. It was brilliant."*

The aspect most mentioned by pupils was the feeling of pride in the models they had created and the fact that photographs had been taken of these.

Gardening

Gardening was a new skill to all who chose it, and all hoped to be able to go on using the new skills they had gained.

> *"In gardening we learned a lot. We learned how to plant things, how much water to put on things. We planted vegetables, nasturtiums and some other plants. When we planted the seeds two days later they were sprouting.They are still growing down there by the dinner school. It was good fun outside in the fresh air."*

Filming

Pupils mentioned different highlights, filming the supported study scheme itself and a play which they had rehearsed. As well as the pleasure and pride in the videos they had made, the common feeling was that they had learned to use the camcorder "properly" and would now be more confident in using it.

French

Food tasting, computer games and question/answer sessions were all mentioned by pupils as highlights. They all felt better prepared for the planned trip to France and less apprehensive about approaching a new language in the secondary. Some practised their French with their parents and began watching French programmes on television.

Computing

Using the Apple Mac, changing the size and shape of letters, using the mouse for graphics, and the Grolier encyclopaedia, were all benefits mentioned. For one pupil, being able to find and open files when the headteacher couldn't was a source of particular satisfaction.

Art and crafts

> *"In art and crafts we get lots to do. We learned how to make things. The people at home were really impressed. I was pleased with the magnets for the fridge and the earrings we made."*

Being able to make things and take them home was mentioned by all who had participated. One girl who hadn't been so successful was able to comment:

> *"I still enjoyed being there. I liked going all the time. It just didn't turn out for me."*

Baking

Pupils enjoyed making things like chocolate cake, puff candy and gingerbread men. The best bit was taking it home for their families to try.

> *"My mum tried the chocolate cake and she liked it."*

World Cookery

All pupils who took this option were enthusiastic about what they had learned. They said they had enjoyed making the various dishes and some mentioned having begun to try out other recipes at home having seen what they were able to do.

> *"We made spaghetti bolognaise, Indian curry, a Chinese fry-up and Chilli. We also made soup. I liked cookery best. We got to take it home ... My dad is a chef and he thought it was good."*

The benefits

Was it a worthwhile investment of money and of teachers' time and energy? The answer from teachers and the headteacher was an unqualified 'yes'.

> *"Even though it comes after maybe a hard day it is a pleasure because of the terrific attitude of the kids. It is a big bonus just having a different kind of time with them, being in a different relationship, seeing their pleasure in learning. It is no hardship."*

All parents interviewed thought it had produced some noticeable benefits, mainly in terms of a maturation in attitudes and an increase in self-confidence. While these were not in general dramatic changes there was one example of a boy whose disruptive, antagonistic behaviour had previously been a serious problem. He had, according to his mother, "turned over a new leaf " since he had started attending after school classes.

The main kinds of things parents said they had noticed about their children's behaviour were:

- enjoying school more or being more enthusiastic about school work

> *"Getting him out in the morning isn't a chore so much any more. He's a different wee boy when it comes to going to the school."*

> *" When she comes home, she goes straight across to her Gran's to show her what she's made. Then she goes to her aunty's, and she says 'I'll just have this for my tea tonight mum.'"*

- being more independent or self-reliant

> *" It's made her more grown up, more responsible. "*

> *" She helps me much more in the house now - she's a great help. "*

> *"She's better at her learning noo. She seems to be able to do things hersel."*

- using learned skills

> *" Things she learned in technology have rubbed off on her - how to work things out, for instance. "*

> *" He picked the gardening because his Grandpa has a garden, and he thought he could help him with it. "*

> *" He comes in now and says 'Close the door' or 'Open the window' in French. Of course, I don't know what he says, but he tells me afterwards. "*

> *" She can help me more in the house now, and she always wants to make what she did in World Cookery. It was brilliant, the World Cookery course. "*

- mixing more with other children

> *" He mixes better with the other children - he always had problems with that before. He's made a couple of new friends. "*

- being more communicative

> *" I think she communicates more when she comes home and talks about what she did. "*

- having different attitudes to programmes on television

> *"He is more interested now in educational programmes. He writes down things he saw on the television."*

"She loves watching French programes on the telly, and gets really excited when she understands something. She's desperate now to get to France."

Parental participation

Most parents said they were willing to take part in the sessions if possible - however, some had shift-work which would make it difficult to participate on a regular basis. Most were worried, however, because they didn't think they could actually teach their children anything and thought more along the lines of making tea and coffee. When asked if they would be interested in attending workshops on helping (rather than "teaching") their children, all parents except one agreed that they would be willing to attend. The parent who took exception saw this as an implication that she was incapable of bringing up her own children properly.

" I think I know what they're looking for anyway. I make him do his work over and over again if it isn't tidy. "

The response from parents in an area marked by poverty and high unemployment is illuminating. It shows an interest and concern, combined with deference to the experts, a lack of knowledge and lack of self-confidence about their role in relation to their children's education.

For the headteacher it suggested that there was a lot of mileage to be gained in enlisting parental co-operation, not just in supported study but in homework and in home learning in a much broader sense.

Various suggestions for things to do at supported study were made, including First Aid, Woodwork, Basic Electricity and Languages (German and Italian).

Differences from school

There are useful lessons to be drawn from the experience of one primary school. This was a voluntary option to stay on at school. Yet it was taken up by every pupil without coercion or pressure. Pupils stayed on at school for one and a half hours from 3.00 to 4.30. Most had to be thrown out at 4.45. Some were still there at 5.00 and didn't want to leave. All said that they had enjoyed and learned from the experience. The activities were in themselves enjoyable, but students' enthusiasm also stemmed from the general atmosphere, relationships and the informality of the occasion.

This raises the immediate question - why shouldn't this be the normal everyday experience of classroom life?

There are a number of possible explanations. Perhaps the key factors were the choice of activity, the teacher-pupil ratio, the limited time-frame, the access to computers and film cameras, or simply the novelty of it all. Probably the most significant factor, though, is the voluntary nature of it, because flowing from this are more relaxed attitudes on the part of teachers, less pressure to get through a syllabus, a greater willingness to learn from pupils, less disciplinary tensions, and the escape clause of simply not doing it if it becomes problematic or fails to work. Related to this is the control which it gives to teachers, and to some extent to pupils too. It is their scheme. They invented it and they can just uninvent it or change it.

This does not mean that what happens in school generally could not be more like what happens in supported study. The kind of activities enjoyed by pupils are all feasible classroom activities. For all the reasons cited they are more difficult to organise, more difficult to control, and involve commitment, energy, and risk-taking - qualities which are perhaps not at a premium in the current educational/political climate.

Given the awareness of the pupils themselves, and their ability to make an assessment of their experiences in and out of the mainstream classroom, they could play a more significant role in the management of the classroom. For example, they could play a more active role in the discussion of how their experience of supported study could be replicated more closely within the classroom. They might also be more closely involved in setting and monitoring the ground rules for day-to-day classroom life and work.

Volunteer tutoring

The Dunbarton model also included voluntary tutoring on an individual basis. Volunteer pupils and volunteer tutors come together on a one-to-one or small group basis, as many as 30 pupils and 30 tutors in one school. A teacher is present to offer help and support to the tutors, who are lay people often without any training in working with young people.

For the support teachers it was a source of surprise, and sometimes frustration, that the tutors came with unrealistic expectations of learning and tutoring. They tended to want to 'teach' children rather than to help them learn, to believe that it was a matter of children learning specific skills rather than building confidence and self-esteem, and to expect visible and systematic progress rather than the halting and gradual growth of self belief.

From the teachers' point of view the need for training of volunteer tutors was a high priority.

For the children's point of view this was, for some, the only time in the week when someone sat down with them and gave them individual attention.

The acting assistant head in Kilbowie primary wrote:

> *"Tutors may not realise and, indeed, it is difficult to quantify the effect that tutors have on their charges but to their credit the very fact that even the most belligerent of our children turns up regularly and sits meekly and expectantly waiting to see their tutor, speaks volumes. Their patience in dealing with parents who have not kept up their side of the partnership is admirable".*

The Clydebank group have demonstrated that there is a reservoir of goodwill and help which may be tapped considerably further than it has been so far. Those who do the tutoring often do it simply as a community service or because it gives them personal satisfaction to be in that relationship with young people.

For some it offers a training opportunity or the opportunity for professional development. The most obvious group in this category are student teachers. There is considerable scope for universities and colleges of education to liaise more closely with schools, to include this as part of pre-service courses, or even to give students course credit for work with young people.

There is a lesson in here for secondary schools too. Supported study in the primary schools was not really 'study' at all. Nor was it homework. But it was for the most part enjoyable, imaginative, co-operative and creative. It was enrichment, extension, reinforcement, and sometimes learning of a totally novel kind.

These are criteria which could be applied to the much of the homework and out-of-school learning that is prescribed in the secondary school. Some routine chores and rote learning are inevitable in study for exams, but if we are to take seriously what teachers, students, and parents in secondary schools said, a lot more could be done to make assigned homework tasks more like those undertaken in the primary after-school sessions.

CHAPTER 7

THE ISSUES

1. Getting the setting right

Most tutors and students agree that getting the context right is of paramount importance.

But what is the best context, and what are the ingredients of a good environment? The following appear to be important features to be considered:

- size of room
- heating
- lighting
- fabric (carpets, curtains)
- furnishings (tables, chairs, desks)

The standard classroom is perhaps the least attractive environment. The library tends to be favourite in all schemes, but libraries differ in design - cosiness and intimacy, places that are inviting or hostile.

The best option is probably the purpose-built, or purpose-designed, room. In some schemes the room has been laid out and furnished to be warm, inviting, and relaxing, but encouraging a work orientation. Since there are different preferences of working style it is helpful to have different options - low coffee tables with easy chairs, a table with a large working surface, private carrels with sidescreens as in a library or language lab.

The number of people per room is also an important ingredient. Large empty rooms with two or three students are less inviting than rooms where there is a buzz from twenty or more all working together.

Different rooms for different functions are useful. In one scheme students work closely juxtaposed, a student doing private study next to a group of four others chatting together, another two clicking away on computers next to a student getting help from a tutor. In another scheme there is a room for television, another for music practice, a third for computers, the library for quiet study, and the fifth year common room for less quiet study.

2. Access and supervision

The situation of the study centre within the school is significant from an access and supervision point of view. By their design some schools lend themselves well to the supported study concept. For example, Cardinal Newman in Bellshill benefits from a school design in which the library sits at the hub of the school and is inter-connected with study rooms, computer rooms, and social areas. It is easy for students to move from one area to another and for teachers to keep in touch with them.

In some schools the library is separated from the supported study rooms by such a distance that it makes young people think twice before making the journey. In one school it involves going down two floors, across the playground into another building and up two floors.

The computer rooms and art room may be in yet another building, and teachers are reluctant to have young people wandering around the school unsupervised. The solution to this in some schools is simply to prohibit students from moving around unsupervised, with the result that access to useful resources is denied. Others operate a trust system with individual students, or groups, who are judged to be responsible, allowed to go off on their own.

3. Resources

Most schemes offer access to materials such as the normal library resources. Most also offer access to computers and printers, sometimes with page-making facilities or desk top publishing software. Some have free access to computers, others limit it to certain nights, certain times, or for certain purposes. Access to computers is necessarily limited, however, and there are usually rules about computer use. Some have specially designed resources such as self study packs.

There are sometimes disputes about priorities and turn taking. Should a group of three pupils playing a computer game be allowed to hog the Apple Mac for an hour? Should there be usage priorities or time limits?

There are often issues over ownership of resources. Resources may be seen as the province of the Business Studies Department, or of TVEI, or of the librarian. They may be jealously guarded and, during the daytime, rigorously monitored. Uncontrolled evening access may then be seen as problematic and give rise to disputes. .

Craig's Log

24/4/91
I did Home economics and French. With Maths I needed a little help by Mr. Lappin (PE teacher) and Mr. Leslie (Modern Studies). I needed glue but Mr. Leslie had some. I had trouble with maths and Mr. Lappin did't know how to fix it and neither did I nor Mr. Leslie. Afterwards I felt good and happy as I was looking forward to the BB.

25/4/91
When I arrived I felt a little bit annoyed as I didn't like the subject last period but I was happy at the end of the homework study tonight as I done most of my homework myself and it had saved me from doing it at home.

29/4/91
I did Maths homework as I have to study for an exam tomorrow. Mr. Leslie helped me with a little bit of my work. I had a sore throat and chest and was looking forward to a run home and to get to my bed.

1/5/91
Since I started coming to this homework study it has helped me a lot. I have started doing maths, drama, HE exams and coming here and studying for them has helped me a lot. When I arrived I was pretty happy but by the time I left I was tierd and bored. I forgot my pen but lukily Mr. Leslie gave me one.

2/5/91
Did French and English revision. The girls were chatty a little bit but after Mr. Leslie told them to get on it was fine.

9/5/91
Today I was asked to do an English exam as I missed it when the class done it on Friday so I did my English exam tonight and I thought I did well and that's the first time I did an exam and felt good after it and it's because I have been coming to the homework study and I have been studying for the exam. This exam is important as it will tell me if I will be sitting F,G or C for 4th year exams as I am a 3rd year pupil.
P.S. I have also been studying for French exams and I passed my foundation and general.

13/5/91
Tonight I was working with the phone and I was looking up bus services for SVS with help with Mr. Reid and Mr. Leslie and I finished my work successfully. This will help with my SVS exam on Monday.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

15/5/91
When I arrived I felt happy, looking forward to doing my homework in an enjoyable atmosphere. I did SVS work. I had to organise a day trip with help with the two teachers, Mr. Lappin and Mr. Leslie and another pupil called Stewart.
*Just to say that the English exam I did I passed. I got 21/30 thanks to the homework study and Mr. Leslie. And also passed my HE exam.

22/5/91
When I arrived I was shatterd after hard work from PE. I studied english SVO and maths. Mr. Lappin helped me with my SVS work. I had to write an information sheet for a day trip to Butlins. And as Mr. Lappin is organising a trip to Ardeche he helped me. Mr. Leslie helped me by going down to the office and seeing if there was a letter I was wanting.

27/5/91
I felt happy and looking forward to my SVS work

29/5/91
SVS work.

5/6/91
SVS work. I was using the library phone.

6/6/91
When I came I felt I felt happy but tierd and by the end of the evening I was happy but dead. I was using phone and computers.

STARTED 4th SEPTEMBER, - NEW SESSION.

4/9/91
When I arrived I felt great because I was looking forward to being back in the homework study. I had to type a letter and Mr. Leslie and Mr. Lappin let me into the computor room. I really enjoyed the first night on the homework study - it's great being back.

11/9/91
I arrived at 3.35 I felt happy looking forward to do my homework in an enjoyable way. I done my English work and maths and RE homework and I wrote my log book up (obviously!) I left at 5.30 and felt more happy because I had done all my homework in time before I left.

7/10/91
First I will say how great it is to write in my new logbook (It's about time you sent them - ha! ha! Ha! - just a wee joke). I was working in the computer room today with English homework.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

23/10/93
CSS investigation helped by Mr. Leslie. Today I had to phone schools and Mr. Leslie let me use the phone and let me in the computer room to type out investigations. Thanks.

6/11/91
CSS investigations (computing) english and typing. When I arrived I felt sad but by the time I left I left a bit better.

7/11/91
CSS investigation. English report. Girls at the back of me would not shut up until the teacher told them to be quiet.

13/11/91
English and CSS. I really enjoyed tonights session

25/11/91
I was very tierd today when I arrived at the homework study as I was up at 3.00 am doing a milk run. You will notice in the next couple of pages that I have only wrote 1 or two things but it's because I am studying for my prelim exams so it will get me good grades. And it will all be thanks to the homework study.

27/11/91
French. CSS and Maths. Mr. Lappin helped me with my maths and Mr. Leslie.

28/11/91
The last time you read something on the back I was telling you about my exams. Well I am now telling you that I am now started my exams. (French today) and Mr. Leslie (M. in C.) has kindly said that I can still come to the Homework Study and I am very greatful. I got a grade 4 which is good thanks to HWS. Today I was in a quiet group. You see I like the Homework Study even better now as you have a room where there total silence and a room (library) when there's a little talk during doing your homework study.

4/12/91
English and SVS I was in the library at 2.55 as I had finished a CSS exam and I was helping the librarian.

9/12/91
Not a very good atmosphere around the HWS tonight. There was a lot of people talking to Mr. Leslie about the computor room. And asking can we get back in, but after 5 - 10 minutes it settled down and we did homework.

18/12/91
Did investigation. Felt happy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

6/1/91
SVS work, but did not come out.(not solved).

8/1/92
Hello! me again. Happy new year. Today I done my CSS investigation. That has got to be in for January. It is important that it is done or I don't even get a chance to do my exam so Mr. Leslie is allowing me to use the computer to type it out.

9/1/92
I felt happy - looking forward to doing my homework. I did CSS with help from Mr. Leslie and Miss McPaul the Librarian.

15/1/92
When I arrived I felt sad. I had some bad news before I arrived. I went up to CSS and typed out my CSS investigation.

22/1/92
When I arrived I felt a bit better, but still down a little bit. I worked on CSS SVS - computers.

29/1/92
Felt happy but tird. Got help with HE and CSS.

10/2/92
As you have read in the last previous pages I was doing a CSS investigation on the computer and got it graded as a 5 which is top mark. My teacher said "If I never typed it I could have got a 6 as my writing is poor" (as you can see!)

13/2/92
I was excited towards the end as Mr. Leslie (Man in Charge) told us he had to pick two pupils to go to the Scotland game next Wednesday (of course after the homework study). It is with the transport buses that we get home. I don't know whether I am going or not but I will tell you when I know. (If I decide to come back).

19/2/92
When I arrived I felt happy, great, fantastic. In the last page I told you I was maybe going to Hampden and I can tell you that I am definitely going. I suppose its because I am a hard working pupil in the HWS.

16/3/92
I was doing Home economics as I am preparing a meal for seven teachers and the librarian, Miss McPaul, let me use her typewriter.

26/3/92
Looked over my exam paper. Also did a letter to hotel course for management (careers library).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

4. Selling the idea

When you set up a scheme how do you sell the idea? And once it is established how does it grow?

It would appear for many schools that this has not been a problem. An announcement to students and a standard letter to parents has, in many instances, brought a bigger demand than the school was able to cope with.

However, the cold sell will tend to attract only the most motivated, possibly those who would already be doing their homework or are most inclined to see the need to. Some co-ordinators have complemented the publicity material with approaches to individual students, persuading them to take part, or where that has failed persuading their parents.

There are some young people who, by their own admission, would not have attended supported study without the push from their parents. This was only possible, though, because the message had been sold to parents in the first place, sometimes through an individual approach to the parent by the co-ordinator.

5. Taking account of the sociometrics

One of the strongest reasons for students taking part in supported study is that it is more sociable than lone study at home. You can work individually but still be in company. You can break off occasionally for a chat or you can share your work, get or give help. One of the most striking features of supported study schemes is this kind of co-operative work, often where pupils are working on different tasks at different levels. In an environment where everyone else is working it is easier to work because there is an accepted norm. For this reason some schemes like to create a club-like, but industrious, atmosphere.

Thought has to be given, therefore, to the composition of the social group and whether some engineering is necessary. In Waverley in Drumchapel the headteacher tried to build the cohort from the nucleus of friends and fellow travellers. Some schools felt it was important to keep the group of roughly equivalent ages so that older students would not be put off by "the babies". In St. Leonard's the complete mix of ages from 12 to 18 seems to have been accepted without demur from all students. For Chris Nairn, the co-ordinator, the beauty of this is that the younger ones see that is taken seriously by the older ones.

6. The nature of the contract

There is either an implicit or explicit contract with students. The school, or centre, may assume that there are rules and expectations or spell these out clearly. In some cases, the rules have been drawn up by a committee of students and tutors. Rules and expectations cover ground such as:

- attendance
- conduct
- use of resources
- use of time
- smoking

After their first year's experience some projects began to move towards a more formal contract with the students. An actual paper contract signed by the students was seen to be an act of commitment, and a mechanism by which they could be held to account.

The contract may also be a three way contract with student, parent, and teacher as co-signatories.

7. Keeping pupils and parents informed

In some schools students were not aware of when classes were on, or what classes were on on any given evening. Parents were often not knowledgeable either and some young people were able to play their parents off against the school by telling them they were at supported study when they weren't.

St. Margaret Mary's in Castlemilk has tried to get round this with a supported study diary setting out clearly when sessions are on, and supported study notes for teachers and a whiteboard in the main entrance hall to remind students of what is on that evening.

Some schools are now working harder at keeping parents in the picture through regular letters and meetings in case the homework class is being used as a smokescreen for other enterprises. St. Leonard's informs parents of any of sustained absence.

8. Expectations

The atmosphere of the centre may be laissez-faire or directed. Students may feel easy and relaxed or feel that they have to work. This is, in part, related to the purposes of the centre. As well as this general climate of expectations there are messages from individual tutors to individual students - for example, 'you can do better'. This may or may not be helpful depending on to whom it is said, by whom it is said, and how it is said. Students often enjoy supported study because they are free from parent or teacher pressure, and free of the norms and expectations of the classroom.

There is probably an optimum level of expectations, what one co-ordinator referred to as "adjusting the pressure control", that is, avoiding creating any feelings of pressure but at the same time encouraging a positive belief that things can be achieved.

In each supported study scheme a norm does seem to have been established, apparently by the students themselves, but in reality at least as much by the way the centre is managed and by the hidden agenda of tutor expectations. It is important to be vigilant about that norm and for tutors to exchange views of how that norm is developing.

If there is a staff-student management committee it may be useful to discuss it in that forum.

9. Staff - selection and management

Should anyone interested enough be allowed to tutor supported study, or should care be taken in the selection of staff?

Most schemes feel that the quality of the staff is critical and have found there to be some particularly effective, and some less effective, staff. What are the qualities found in someone good at this kind of work? Qualities emphasised by tutors and students are:

- having a good reputation/being liked by students
- having a 'presence', 'personality' or 'charisma'
- being able to establish one-to-one rapport with students
- being sensitive and empathic
- being able to work flexibly and adaptively
- having some understanding of generic learning and study skills

Staff are selected by different methods, by volunteering, by interview or by the head making a decision. In extended day schemes where students opt for particular subjects there are some advantages if these are tutored by their own teachers because this then can feed back into classroom work and provide a seamless continuity. This is obviously not always possible, and there are sometimes advantages in the student meeting a different approach, both to the learning process and to the student as an individual.

Most centres have a roster of staff who work on different evenings. From the student point of view this means 'good' evenings and 'less good' evenings because of their tutor preferences, or because some tutors are more effective, or some tutor combinations work more effectively. In some cases subject qualifications are important. Students doing higher level mathematics, for example, welcome support from a mathematician. Some centres timetable staff by subject expertise and students know on which nights they can get help in that subject area.

There is normally a rationale for who works when and with whom. It is sometimes constrained by availability of staff and staff preferences, and some schemes feel they have been disadvantaged by the lack of staff expertise in certain key areas.

Where staff prove not to be suitable, or at least not as good as other staff who might wish to be involved, what can be done? In some schools students have complained to the co-ordinator or to other staff about teachers who "don't really help you properly", "won't let us talk", "are more interested in their own work" or "just sits at the front and never looks at what you're doing". In some cases this has been dealt with by the headteacher persuading a member of staff to step down in favour of another colleague. In others staff have been given a clearer remit and informally monitored.

An issue to be considered is the systematic evaluation of the quality of support and help that students are receiving. There should be scope for them to monitor this for themselves and to give feedback to the supported study co-ordinator.

10. The role of tutors

Tutors in most schemes tend to be teachers, although they are not always teachers from that school. There are a variety of roles for them

- supervising and monitoring
- consultancy on demand
- general guidance and support
- tuition

In some schemes teachers are present to keep an eye on things, monitoring behaviour and use of resources. They may also be called on for advice or help. In some they are more proactive, circulating constantly from group to group or individual to individual, observing, or commenting on work. In some schemes, from time to time there is direct input from tutors on study skills and there are study guides available.

In some schemes teachers actually teach a group or tutor an individual in given subject areas almost as an extended curriculum. In this mode of operation teachers offer given subjects at specific times and students enrol for those subjects, for example French from 4-5 and Art from 5-6.

The more difficult role for tutors is the generic flexible one, and it is in this area that tutors say they would appreciate more help and training.

11. The role of librarians

Most schemes involved librarians. They differed widely in the role they played and the quality of support they offered. Three different kinds of librarians could be distinguished:

1. The gatekeepers. Some librarians jealously guarded their empires and seemed to resent the intrusion of young people into their carefully manicured space. Students and teachers alike were aware of this and mentally tiptoed around the librarian, careful not to offend. It was put by one fourth year boy in the following way:

> *"She hates you using her books. Because it will create a nasty gap on the shelf or you might litter up the room. On the night she's not here it's like Christmas."*

This type of librarian does seem, however, to be a dying breed, and schools tend to be aware of this when making new appointments.

2. The custodians. Some librarians played a more low key role, more or less efficiently controlling the flow of resources, responding to requests and directing young people to where to find things. In a sense these might be seen as the traditional librarians.

3. The facilitators. As new librarians are appointed more and more fall into the third category of proactive facilitators. They are learner-centred, keen to see resources being used, actively encouraging students to share and work together, being alert to young people needing help, taking a tutorial role in helping young people, sometimes sitting alongside students and helping them with their problems. Some have taken the initiative in introducing information and study skills, or in introducing and tutoring students using new information technology. CD rom, for example, has recently opened up a whole range of new and exciting possibilities for supported study.

12. Support and training

There has been staff training in some areas which has examined issues such as why children fall behind, pressures at home, organising homework, study skills, and how to deal with problems. In schools where there has been no such training there is, nonetheless, a lot of staff development going on. Teachers who work with one another learn from that experience. They observe other styles, other ways of helping. Often it is the first time a maths teacher has seen a French teacher at work, or a French teacher has had to counsel a student on their approach to studying maths.

Tutors who had no familiarity with computers have, for example, learned to use them from other teachers or from students. Some tutors, previously unfamiliar with study skills approaches, have learned along with students.

Evaluation is sometimes built in. Tutors may take a half hour after the session, for example, to review and assess their work. This may also be done by keeping a systematic record of the session - what students did, problems that arose, things to do differently. In Dunbarton a tutor self-evaluation sheet is provided by the Division.

13. Non-involved staff

There is quite often resentment from some members of staff not involved in the scheme. It was described by one tutor as a "those and such as those" attitude. In other words, the supported study tutors are seen as an elite cadre. Sometimes this feeling is reinforced because it is assumed that the teachers involved are regarded by school management as the best teachers. This early animosity has apparently diminished over time as supported study has become more accepted and as the involvement of teachers has widened. It is seen as important within the Region, however, that opportunities for teachers to be involved are broadened and that 'the supported study tutors' do not become a fixed body.

There is also an issue of 'interference'. Sometimes a student will receive help in the evening from a subject teacher, say an English teacher, who is not that student's regular teacher. That teacher may, within a few minutes, help that child to solve a problem or to have insights which were previously beyond him or her. This may then be seen by the regular teacher as undermining, especially if the student lets it be known that superior help is available elsewhere, or even that "Miss X does it a different way. "

In some schemes the supported study tutors work alongside other teachers who are not in the scheme and who are running extra-curricular activities on a voluntary unpaid basis. This will already be the subject of discussion in staffrooms and perhaps elsewhere, and as headteachers take more control over the funding of their schools it will be necessary for them to address this issue.

14. Safety and security

Safety is an issue where students attend the centre in the evening, and perhaps have to walk alone up dark streets or through hostile territory. Gender and race are factors in that equation almost everywhere, and sectarianism is a compounding factor in some Glasgow housing schemes.

Safety is not an issue within the centres themselves. Indeed the centres are often characterised by a feeling of safety, and some are seen as a haven in an unfriendly environment. Most head teachers and teachers commented on how well equipment was treated and the absence of vandalism, destruction or theft.

Because centres are typically located in high crime areas there are security considerations. In one school the TV antenna disappears at regular intervals. In all schools high security has to be provided for computers, videos and other hardware. Grilles on the study centre windows have had to be introduced if they were not there already, a feature that doesn't add to the ethos, and two of the schools have bought curtains to conceal the grilles so as to retain a warm welcoming atmosphere.

CHAPTER 8

THOSE WHO GO AND THOSE WHO DON'T A PROFILE

One of the most pertinent questions to ask about supported study is 'Does it attract a particular type of student, and if so what type? The more studious, the more positive, or the more disaffected?

In order to try to answer this question the responses of students to questionnaires and interviews may be compared.

Nearly 400 students completed questionnaires prior to taking up supported study and 221 students who did not go were given the same questionnaire with a further item on why they didn't attend.

The first set of questions were about attitudes to school.

% of supported study students in each category **n = 398**

	All the time	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
I enjoy being at school	12	56	28	4
I find school work interesting	6	42	47	5
I am unhappy in class	4	8	59	29
I am worried I can't do the work	4	8	69	19
I am involved in extra-curricular activities	11	16	33	40
I am involved in activities outside school	26	23	35	16

It seems clear that most of these students were pretty positive about school. 68% said that they enjoyed being at school all, or most of the time. Only 4% said they never enjoyed being at school and 5% said they never found school work interesting. There was, in fact, very little variation from school to school or from age group to age group.

The high percentage who said they were sometimes unhappy or worried has to be seen within this overall positive context and therefore may be seen as a cause for concern. An interesting figure is the 40% who say they were never involved in extra-curricular activities, perhaps casting doubt on the assumption that these pupils are a natural after-school constituency.

How do they compare with those who didn't go to supported study? The following table reveals some close parallels, with a tendency for supported study students to be a little more positive about school and school work, and a little more likely to be involved in extra-curricular activities and outside school activities.

% of non-supported study students in each category **n = 117**

	All the time	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
I enjoy being at school	6	47	44	3
I find school work interesting	5	26	65	4
I am unhappy in class	3	7	59	31
I am worried I can't do the work	3	5	65	27
I am involved in extra-curricular activities	5	9	35	51
I am involved in activities outside school	15	26	38	21

On two items responses are almost identical - "I am unhappy in class", "I am worried I can't do the work", but on the other four items, these differences suggest a slightly more pro-school attitude for supported study students.

% of students saying all/most of the time n = 398 + 117

	Supported Study	Non Supp Study
I enjoy being at school	68	53
I find school work interesting	48	31
I am involved in extra-curricular activities	27	14
I am involved in activities outside school	49	41

Teachers, school work, and home work

On the second set of questions, relating to teachers, and to other aspects of school, there is a consistently strong positive response from supported study students. From the supported study point of view the most interesting figure is the 88% who rejected the proposition that most homework is a waste of time.

% of supported study students in each category **n = 398**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I like most of my teachers	36	53	9	2
Teachers often pick on me	5	10	39	46
Other pupils often pick on me	4	8	33	55
Most school work is a waste of time	3	7	43	47
Most homework is a waste of time	5	7	43	45
I think this is a good school	26	60	7	7

When we compare these figures with those who didn't go to supported study, there are again close parallels. This is particularly evident if we take the 'agree/strongly agree' categories together. The only striking differences are in the relatively high numbers of supported study students using the 'strongly agree' category or 'I like most of my teachers' (36% as against 10%) and 'I think this is a good school' (26% as against 11%).

% of non-supported study students in each category **n = 117**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I like most of my teachers	10	80	10	0
Teachers often pick on me	1	5	56	38
Other pupils often pick on me	0	3	39	58
Most school work is a waste of time	2	7	44	47
Most homework is a waste of time	5	13	47	35
I think this is a good school	11	80	8	1

In summary it appears that students who took up the supported study option were, as a group, likely to have slightly more positive attitudes to their school and to their teachers. They were also slightly more likely to say that they were picked on by teachers and other students. We might raise the question, although the evidence in slight, as to whether this group contains a higher proportion of vulnerable young people, and young people with a stronger investment in being accepted by their school and by their teachers. Some young people interviewed clearly fell into this category. For some young people at least, supported study was seen as an avenue for raising self-esteem and social acceptability.

> *"I get picked on by some of the boys in the class who think I'm weak because I'm wee and skinny. Teachers, ...well just some teachers... do that as well. They call me names which gives the others a good laugh. It is humiliating sometimes you know. But I'm going to get tough and prove to them I can do*

it. So I stick in at the homework classes and when I get home I go on working. But if it doesn't work out then I'll go into the army."

Interviewer - "Will that not be worse?"

"I know it will be hard. But if I survive that it will make me tougher and more proud of myself."

Attitudes to homework and home study

The questionnaires filled in by both groups of students allowed more detailed comparisons of attitudes to homework and home study specifically.

% of supported study students in each category **n = 398**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I would be more likely to do homework if there was somewhere at home to do it	20	37	25	18
I would find it easier to do homework if I got some help	24	55	10	11
I would find it easier if I could do it with my friends	18	42	26	14
It is difficult to concentrate	15	44	28	13
Homework is so boring I get fed up and just try to do it as quickly as possible	10	32	38	20
Most of the time I enjoy doing homework	8	47	29	16
I wish someone would give me help on how to plan and organise my homework	21	43	23	13
I find it difficult to study for exams because things just don't stay in my head	28	34	22	16
My parent(s) give me a lot of help with my homework	8	40	30	22
My parent(s) give me a lot of encouragement	33	50	7	10
I just don't see any point in doing homework	7	10	36	47

57% agree/strongly agree that the home environment is not conducive to doing homework while 79% said that they would be more likely to do homework if they got some help with it. 64% said they would appreciate help with organising their homework. While 85% of young people said that their parents gave them encouragement, only 48% said that their parents gave them help.

The following table, summarising responses from the non-supported study students, is interesting predominantly because of the close parallels between the two groups. There are, however, some differences. These are most marked in the first two items on the questionnaire:

% of non-supported study students in each category **n = 117**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I would be more likely to do homework if there was somewhere at home to do it	4	38	44	14
I would find it easier to do homework if I got some help	5	52	34	9
I would find it easier if I could do it with my friends	15	45	31	9
It is difficult to concentrate	9	38	42	11
Homework is so boring I get fed up and just try to do it as quickly as possible	8	25	55	12
Most of the time I enjoy doing homework	4	31	50	15
I wish someone would give me help on how to plan and organise my homework	8	43	41	8
I find it difficult to study for exams because things just don't stay in my head	16	43	37	4
My parent(s) give me a lot of help with my homework	7	36	44	13
My parent(s) give me a lot of encouragement	21	59	16	4
I just don't see any point in doing homework	2	12	55	31

Comparing the tables, the two items on which there are the sharpest differences are - "I would be more likely to do homework if there was somewhere at home to do it" (20% of supported study students strongly agree as against 4% of non-supported study students).

On the item "I would find it easier to do homework if I got some help" 24% of supported study students strongly agree as against 5% of non-supported study students.

In both groups 60% say they would find it easier to do homework if they could do it with their friends.

Questionnaires are, of course, fallible instruments, but one only needs to study the spread of responses to see that at least young people were thinking seriously about the answers, an observation that was confirmed by follow-up interviews with them.

Recurrent themes in interviews were the lack of space or a congenial environment at home, interfering brothers and sisters, and the dead end reached when you couldn't understand, didn't know how to, or didn't want to, ask for help. This is not surprising given the deliberate policy to aim supported study at those students. It does confirm, however, that the rationale for such a policy was well-founded. It also reveals, however, that the problems are essentially similar among those who don't attend.

The questionnaire evidence also gives the lie to myths and generalisations about feckless and unconcerned parents. That is not, for the most part, how young people perceive it. Nonetheless, there are still 20% of young people who say that their parents do not give them encouragement with homework, and that is a figure which has already stimulated some schools to redouble their efforts in reaching all parents.

Jason

Jason has a milk round and has to get up at 3.00 every morning to do it. He gets back home in time for a quick breakfast before getting out to school at 8.30. After school he is 'totally knackered' and sometimes falls asleep in front of the telly. Often, though, his pals come round or he goes down to the cafe with his big brother. At 6.00 he gets the bus back to the school where he goes to the supported study class from 6.30 to 9.00. He enjoys this and feels he is getting to understand a lot of things that sped by him during the day.

He gets back home by 9.30 and he likes to unwind a bit before going to bed. He usually watches a movie, or his big brother will have a video. He goes to bed about 11.00, sometimes earlier if the video is rotten. His mum nags him about getting to bed earlier but he's usually quite wide awake when he gets back from supported study and wants a chance to "relax awake not relax asleep."

Until he started supported study he had never done homework and doesn't think he would have the concentration and energy without it.

Andrea thought she might like to go to supported study but didn't think it was possible. Andrea is home by 4 pm and usually finds her mother in a pretty bad mood and harassed because she has had a hard day with the baby and Andrea's two year old sister, and the house is a tip.

Andrea finds it difficult to cope with the two simultaneous demands made on her to tidy the kitchen and to look after the baby while her mum goes out to do the shopping. If she looks after the baby and watches "Home and Away" she can leave tidying the kitchen until later, as long as she has tidied the kitchen before 7 o'clock when her dad gets home, as he hates to see the house in a mess and he expects his tea to be ready. Andrea usually takes out the dog while her dad is having his tea and she likes to take her time over it because it's a good excuse to get out of the house. She stopped complaining about her older brother never doing his share because her dad always sided with him.

Chances are when she gets home the baby will be screaming because she has a skin allergy which always seems to be at its worst in the evening. Her mum who has had to live with it for most of the day is glad to get out in the evening and Andrea finds herself once more looking after the baby. She has thought about asking the teacher if he could write to her mum and ask if she could do supported study. Her mum might say 'yes' but that probably wouldn't be very fair on her mum.

Willie

Willie thinks that supported study is the best thing that has happened to him since he has been at school. Willie almost never did his homework but that didn't mean that he didn't worry about it. Getting into trouble on almost a daily basis made him all the more anxious about it and determined to do it this time. However, Willie had fallen into an after-school regime from which he was finding it almost impossible to escape . He left the school gates at 3.45 pm with the best of intentions and got home determined to get his homework over with just as soon as he could.

First, though, he would go to the fridge and get something to drink and something to eat and not long after he was home, his ma came in and she liked to talk about what she had been doing during the day, and also liked to hear from Willie about how he was getting on at school. This left not a lot of time before "Home and Away" rapidly followed by "Neighbours". His ma gave him his tea while he was watching "Neighbours" and after tea he would determine to go up and do his homework.

But after tea, there was always something, a phone call or a knock on the door and an invitation to go out and play football or just to hang out. He knew he would do his homework when he got back. When Willie got back home around 9 o'clock, he was either far too tired or there was something good on the telly and, anyway, there was always the morning. He could always do homework before leaving for school.

Willie never got up in time to do homework before leaving for school, but if he was in early enough or if there wasn't anything too serious going on during the first period, he could do it then or get a copy from somebody else. This wasn't always a feasible solution because his homework for Home Economics was to make a sultana cake, and, on reflection, he could have been doing that in the kitchen while he was talking to his ma. Maybe even while watching "Home and Away". Why hadn't he thought of that?

Supported study had changed all that. By 5.30 pm homework was done and he went home feeling free as a bird with the whole evening ahead of him. He had missed "Home and Away" and although he had set his video timer to record it he found he actually never got round to watching it anyway so it wasn't much of a loss. His enjoyment of football was doubled because it was now guilt free. Not getting into trouble in school was a very big bonus, but there was another bonus too - he found he was actually not only enjoying subjects more, but he was actually doing better into the bargain.

The untapped pool

> *"I think supported study is a good idea. It would help me with my homework but I never get a chance to go."*

There are clearly many young people who do not attend for a variety of reasons. Students who didn't attend supported study were asked what would be most likely to make them attend. They replied as follows:

% saying they would go to supported study if..... **(n=117)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I had someone to go with	3	37	46	14
There were teachers I got on with	4	42	44	10
My parents would let me	7	26	43	24
I thought it would help me	10	70	13	7
I could leave whenever I want	9	58	25	8
There was transport to take me home after	14	30	48	8
It was at a better time	13	16	52	19
It was in a different place	3	11	67	19

Some messages are quite unambiguous. Time and place are not very significant factors. The most significant factor is the need to be convinced that it will actually be of benefit. 80% are in that category. This should be good news, as it suggests that the factors preventing most young people from attending have to do with persuasion and conviction.

33% mention parental permission. Do these parents need to be persuaded? 47% mention transport, perhaps an overlapping group since safety was one of the parents' main concerns.

69% mention being able to leave whenever they want. This is a thorny issue and no school in Strathclyde has so far allowed this. However, in some schools younger students have stopped attending because, having completed their homework in twenty minutes or half an hour they were then obliged to stay the full ninety minutes, sometimes with nothing to do.

Making attendance more flexible is resisted because it may be the thin end of a wedge. Students might, for instance, decide to give up and leave early simply because of the knowledge that that option was available, whereas having made the psychological commitment to ninety minutes means not having to make any further choices about persisting or giving up. In terms of peer group norms it might be unsettling to others if some people started to come and go at will. This is what is perceived as the risk of a more flexible 'contract'.

However, there were many young people who felt that the choice they were making to study at home, later in the evening, or when the inclination took them, was the right choice. Persuasion or pressure on them or their parents might even be counter productive.

After all, the measure of supported study would not necessarily be 100% attendance. The following were some comments made by young people who didn't attend:

> *"I can concentrate better at home."*
>
> *"My best reason for not going to supported study is because often after 7 hours in school learning I can't be bothered. I just want to go home and go out to play."*
>
> *"We go to school to learn. We go home to be with our familys. What are we getting homework for."*

CHAPTER 9

HAS IT BEEN A SUCCESS? A VIEW FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

Has supported study so far met, fallen short of, or exceeded, expectations?

From all points of view there appears to be a high level of agreement that supported study has been a success. The following are examples of how people from different perspectives answered the question 'Has it been successful?'

The authority

Within the authority those who instigated the scheme did so out of a belief that it would work, and were not surprised that it did work. However, the enthusiasm of students and teachers for supported study exceeded most people's expectations.

> *"It has achieved more than I honestly thought it could. For me it was really about giving young people the space and time to gain confidence and optimism about doing school work. Their enthusiasm has totally surprised and delighted me." (Education Officer)*

There were others who had no hand in the planning or creation of the initiative but were asked to carry the initiative forward in their division. Some initially had reservations about how attractive it would be or now well it would work:

> *"I was a little sceptical at the beginning because I could see problems - divisiveness among pupils and teachers, difficulties in monitoring, what would happen when the novelty wore off? Those fears have been totally confounded. I'm a complete convert." (Education Officer)*

> *"It is one of the most worthwhile projects I have ever been involved in because we can actually see the improvement. As well as the 'hard' indicators of success there have been improvements in inter-personal skills, particularly in the primary schools." (Divisional co-ordinator)*

Some head teachers and teachers were quick to acknowledge that it was the contribution of co-ordinators and education officers which had kept them going when they had severe doubts about the whole idea. Some education officers were able to confirm that:

> *"Mr. X needed a lot of persuading and convincing that it would actually work even although some of his staff were keen. It may just be that he is a natural pessimist . He is now an enthusiast." (Education Officer)*

Everyone could identify issues that still needed to be addressed, from resourcing to targeting of those who would benefit but weren't coming, but the general impression was that it was a highly worthwhile investment of their time and energy.

Headteachers

Some headteachers were enthusiastic from the start, one welcoming an initiative he said he had been pushing with the authority for years. Some were more cautious and a few were dubious about the likely success, or even the likelihood that young people in their area would be interested in such an opportunity. By the second year all headteachers had become positive.

> *"It didn't go very well at the beginning and fulfilled my worst forebodings. A different approach in the second year has changed all that and I can, with my hand on my heart say it is going far better than I thought it could."*
>
> *"Speaking broadly the major achievement I would say is in breaking down the attitude that the education day closes on the school bell. It has encouraged pupils to take a measure of responsibility for study and that does seem to me to be a major achievement."*

Virtually all headteachers were able to single out success stories of individual children who had blossomed as a result of the scheme, and some whose achievements had gone beyond their wildest predictions:

> *"I was speaking to one parent whose child had received seven Standard Grade passes recently. Now this was a kind of harem scarem pupil who wasn't expected to do that kind of thing."*

None of the headteachers would now go back on this and were wondering how supported study could be accommodated in the future when the funding had gone.

Parents

Perhaps one of the surprising things about the initiative is that the impetus for attendance tended not to come from parents but from students themselves. Parents' comments were most typically tinged with surprise that their child should have chosen to participate:

> *"He just did it off his own back. He never even told me at first then he says he is doing this homework class at the school. This is a wee boy, mind, who wouldn't pick up a book and sat wi' his face stuck in the telly. We think it's great but we cannae believe it."*

From the parents' point of view being 'more grown up' and 'more responsible' were mentioned most often:

> *"He's just more grown up now. It's like he's got some of the angry-little-boy out of his system"*

> *"There's no question he is a more helpful boy in the house. He acts more grown up like, more sure of hissel. He's even made new friends."*

Better communication was a benefit mentioned by six of the 25 parents interviewed.

> *"I think she communicates more when she comes home and talks about what she did."*

> *"When she comes home she is full of it. She used to say nothing at all. It was like blood out of a stone so it was."*

A few parents mentioned how it had helped their understanding or ability to help their child.

> *"He often shows me what he's been doing and is more likely to ask for my help than he would before. That gives me a better picture of what he's doing in the school."*

> *"I know more about school work, what they're looking for, how I can help."*

While all were positive about the scheme some parents said that their children were likely to work anyway and had benefited mainly in terms of the sociability of doing their work along with others.

> *"I honestly couldn't say it's made her work harder, but she enjoys the change of scene. She still gets stuck in when she comes home."*

Teachers

Teachers who participated in the scheme were almost all positive, although most could identify some problems or issues that still had to be resolved.

> *"We feel the scheme has really fostered genuine sharing of knowledge and abilities among pupils who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to mix in this way. The mixed age groups led to a far greater degree of collaborative learning than we had anticipated and all pupils....have derived immense satisfaction from working in this way."*

A questionnaire to participating teachers asked the question 'What is the most satisfactory aspect of your involvement in supported study?' From the replies gathered from the 77 teachers who responded the following were the most prevalent themes:

Working with the whole pupil

"In supported study I work with the "whole" pupil, free from the restrictions of subject and syllabus."

"Supported study gives a wider overall view of the child's abilities and therefore more understanding of each individual pupil."

"Changed perception of the kind of help that pupils require."

A pupil-centred perspective

"I have a much clearer picture of what school is like from a pupil's point of view."

"It has made me aware that what pupils expect is different from what teachers expect."

"I had my eyes opened by a few pupils about their ability and their ambitions."

"Surprise at how involved I've become and identified with anxious pupils."

A different relationship

"Often the subject matter is not in my speciality and so the children and I learn together."

"More positive and supportive relationship leading to better motivation, heightened self-esteem."

"Gaining the acceptance and confidence of pupils."

"Being able to help pupils who are motivated to learn and find out for themselves."

A different approach

"I do not 'teach' in supported study. Rather I try to guide, help, suggest and encourage."

"In supported study, you are a provider rather than an informer."

"Not just dealing with my own subject but giving help and support in a variety of ways."

"Having more time to spend helping individual pupils across a wide ability range without the pressure of covering the syllabus."

"I become involved in dialogue with pupils -something I rarely achieve in the classroom."

A different context

"The key to success was the atmosphere created by the staff which had to be flexible to cater for the varying needs of the students."

"There are no interruptions for bureaucracy and one is able to give one's whole attention to the children."

"The extra time available with pupils with learning difficulties was invaluable."

The benefits for the students mentioned most often were self-confidence and self esteem, social skills, increased motivation and enthusiasm, and better exam results.

> *"You could see some of them growing visibly taller, walking taller because of a new-found belief in themselves ."*

> *"The success achieved by middle of the road pupils, whom I possibly wrongly thought were not really interested in achieving better grades. They just didn't know how to study and didn't have facilities at home."*

An interesting comment is made by one teacher about those who stopped coming:

> *"Some of the more able pupils stopped attending because they could do more work at home. This was not a failure of supported study but a realisation by some pupils that they had facilities and support at home."*

Indeed it might be argued that the ultimate success of supported study would be if all students were able to surmount obstacles at home and in the community, and take responsibility for their own out-of-school learning.

In answer to the question: "What is the least satisfactory aspect of your involvement in supported study?" most often mentioned were:

- lack of coverage/help across the whole curriculum
- those who miss out through evening work or clubs
- problem of supervising children once homework was completed
- lack of parental interest/involvement
- lack of time for preparation
- noise/discipline

Back in the classroom

Did teachers' involvement in supported study have implications for their day-to-day classroom work?

Of the 77 teachers who completed questionnaires 50 thought that their day-to-day teaching or relationship with students had been affected in some way. The following paragraphs summarise what teachers said.

a) in terms of what is taught

- less time has to be spent in class on individual study
- more careful attention to how things are explained
- more account taken of individuals and individual problems
- having an option to which students can be directed for help and support
- better knowledge of more students
- more time to cover other aspects of the work
- more time to improve the quality of classroom work
- better awareness of which aspects of the course are likely to cause difficulties
- greater appreciation of the role of, and difficulties with, homework
- more understanding and flexibility
- less tolerance of those who don't attend supported study

"Given the extra time it is easier to understand and assess and give appropriate assistance and encouragement in order to improve pupils' self-esteem."

b) in terms of relationships with students

- students more confident about asking for help
- an easier more relaxed relationship with supported study students
- an easier more relaxed relationship generally
- students see teachers in a different light
- teachers become more approachable
- teachers become more aware of students' personalities
- teachers and students relate to one another more as 'people'
- better relationships strengthens students' self-confidence

"Because teachers are more caring, more insightful, more relaxed, pupils come to see teachers as real people who actually care about them."

c) in terms of how teachers viewed students or students' abilities

- greater awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- adjusting expectations of students' performance or behaviour
- awareness that even those who struggle can achieve
- realisation that all students have problems with some aspects of the work
- more accurate and individualised assessment
- taking a wider less subject-centred view

"I know more of them. I know them better and have a fuller understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, preferences and idiosyncracies."

The students

When asked by an interviewer about the benefits of supported study most students replied in terms of having greater confidence. This was related to their ability to deal with subjects in the classroom. They felt less intimidated, more confident they could handle the subject, more willing to persevere with something they didn't understand, more ready to ask questions:

Growing self-confidence was also related to how they felt about exams.

> *" I used to be feart about exams because I thought I wasn't good enough , I believe a lot more in masel' now."*

Most students, senior students particularly, said it had improved their grades:

> *"It gets you better marks for your homework"*
>
> *"My marks in the prelims were better than I thought they would be"*
>
> *"In Physics last year I was told I was going to get a 4 band. This year I'm a 2 going on 1."*
>
> *"My geography marks have improved a lot."*
>
> *"I've got a wee bit better at maths, but noo am aff ma behaviour card."*
>
> *"It helps me to understaun classwork. I still talk in class mind, but ye know whit yer daen."*
>
> *"I work harder now. Sometimes I come up at lunch time too."*
>
> *"I used to be a Foundy, now I'm a General."*

Indeed students who attended supported study made such advances in class work that they sometimes complained that those who didn't attend after school held them back during daytime classes. The reasons for this increased success were similar to those factors mentioned by teachers - the different context and different relationship:

> *"It helps to have teachers explain to you what you should be doing. Sometimes you don't understand a question but they go over it with you and you can work out what you have to do."*

> *"If you get stuck you can talk it out with them. At home you'd just be getting stuck and all frustrated."*
>
> *"The opportunity to go over problems - doing exam type questions and past exam papers"*
>
> *"In class there are millions of people and the teacher can't come to you just because you want it. Here you get that time and attention."*
>
> *"Some folk are shy about asking things. Some find it easier to ask things here. And the teachers have more time."*
>
> *"You do more study outside because you feel you are getting ahead."*

One of the key ingredients for students was the discovery that teachers could be different - real human beings that you could have a relationship with:

> *"They're just like real people."*
>
> *"Teachers are more relaxed. You discover they have a sense of humour."*

They felt that teachers were also liable to be more sympathetic if they saw a student making the effort.

> *"I think the teachers see you're trying a bit harder."*

Normal classrooms were typically compared unfavourably:

> *"They don't listen to you. They're too busy trying to people to shut up and to get their heads down"*
>
> *"They all talk, right? but I'm the wan that gets chipped oot ootside the door."*
>
> *"In here it's just totally different class"*

One of the commonest complaints, though, was that there weren't enough teachers in enough subjects, so the help you wanted, in maths say, you didn't always get.

> *"The best thing to improve it would be more teachers for different subjects"*

However, students could also get help from their classmates:

> *"It's good as well being with other people who are doing the same work. You can talk about it with them."*

> *"I came because my girl friend comes. I didn't fancy it. I only came 'cos she did, but now we work together and I actually enjoy some of the school work. Now that's a laugh."*

> *"Oh yes, you really do help each other. There's a nice atmosphere, sort of all in it together."*

> *"Even if you don't work with each other it's just nice to have the company when you're doing your study. It's more friendly."*

Getting things done

Getting it behind you and getting it done was one of the benefits mentioned most. It removed the burden of anxiety or guilt, and the looming prospect of having to do it some time in the future.

> *"I just like best getting it done, getting it out the road."*

> *"It's just a wonderful feeling to get it ower wi"*

> *"I'm going to keep coming. It helps you to get through a lot of work. It helps with any difficulties."*

> *"Thank God it's over."*

Was there a stigma?

Some students thought there was little stigma attached to going to supported study classes and had experienced little baiting from others, while a small number had been teased.

> *"You get the wee hairies that say 'oh that's just a waste of time'. I just say it can't do you any harm."*

> *"I used to get slagged but now people can see it's a good idea."*

This seemed, though, to have happened in the early days and there was very little of that left. Indeed in most schools supported study had acquired high status. This was because the people who went were themselves high status, or because there was such a social and academic mix that it would be difficult to stigmatise.

CHAPTER 10

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Looking at the original design and remit for supported study and the expectations held of it within the Region, a list of possible indicators of success offers itself:

10 INDICATORS FOR SUPPORTED STUDY

1. **SELF-CONFIDENCE**
   i.e. growth in self esteem
2. **ATTITUDES TO SCHOOL**
   i.e. more positive attitudes to school in general
3. **ATTITUDES TO INDEPENDENT LEARNING**
   i.e. more positive feelings about working on your own
4. **STUDY HABITS**
   i.e. development of better study habits and routines
5. **STUDY SKILLS**
   i.e. more developed skills in how to study/read/analyse
6. **ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL SUBJECTS**
   i.e. higher attainment in classwork and exams
7. **UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGEMENT**
   i.e. better understanding of, and interest in, what is being learned
8. **TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS**
   i.e. improved relationships between pupils-teachers
9. **SELF-ASSESSMENT**
   i.e. improved skills in assessing own ability/progress
10. **SCHOOL ETHOS**
   i.e. a better feeling /morale in the school as a whole

In terms of expectations what were students' implicit indicators for supported study?

Nearly 400 students were asked to fill in questionnaires before they started supported study sessions (or in the early days of the scheme). The following table summarises their responses:

Expectations of supported study

percentages of students volunteering for supported study **n =398**

	Very important	Quite important	Not important
It will give me a better change of passing exams.	80	12	8
It will make doing homework more enjoyable	46	42	12
I will learn some study skills (how to tackle homework)	52	36	12
It will help me cope with school subjects better	70	19	11
It will give me something to do in the evening	16	37	47
It will get me out of the house	13	25	62
It will give me somewhere to do my work	44	43	13
It will let me use facilities I don't have at home	43	34	23
There will be somebody to give me help and advice	67	23	10

Clearly, what young people wanted most from supported study was a better chance in their exams, and linked directly to this the hope that their subject performance would improve. (indicators 6, and possibly 7).

52% said that study skills were very important and a further 36% saw them as quite important (indicator 5, and possibly 4).

After a first year in the scheme a smaller sample (105) were asked if they felt any of these things had been achieved. They responded as follows:

% of students responding **n = 105**

	agree	not sure	disagree
It has given me a better chance of passing exams	92	7	1
It has made doing homework more enjoyable	89	7	4
I have learned some study skills (How to tackle homework).	68	20	12
It has helped me cope with school subjects better	88	5	7

These student responses to the questionnaire are strongly reinforced by follow-up interviews with students and their teachers. The clearest benefits to students were the help it gave in subject work and exams. They were, however, less sure about study skills, sometimes not too clear what those skills were, or if they could put their hand on their heart and say they were of practical use.

The teachers

It is interesting to compare the views of students with those of their teachers.

Teachers were given the list of indicators and asked to choose their top three priorities for supported study. They responded as follows:

Expectations of supported study		(n=79)
1.	Study habits	29
2.	Self-confidence	27
3.	Attitudes to independent learning	27
3.	Achievement in school subjects	24
5.	Study skills	20
6.	Understanding and engagement	17
7.	Attitudes to school	13
8.	Teacher-student relationships	11
9.	Self-assessment	9
10	School ethos	6

	Achievements of supported study	(n=77)
1.	Teacher-student relationships	30
2.	Achievement in school subjects	28
3.	Study habits	27
4.	Self confidence	24
5.	Study skills	19
6.	Attitudes to independent learning	17
7.	Attitudes to school	15
8.	Understanding and engagement	9
9.	School ethos	6
10.	Self-assessment	5

The most striking aspect of this is the unexpected outcome of better relationships. Although the students' view coincided wholeheartedly with those of teachers this factor was not included in the initial questionnaire sent to them about their expectations for supported study. This merely reinforces the point that it was an unexpected outcome, and not even on the researchers' list of priorities!

The value of good relationships should not be underestimated, however, because it underpins everything else. For example it affects:

- the teacher's better understanding of the student's point of view
- the student's better understanding of the teacher's point of view
- the teacher's greater willingness to listen to the student
- the student's greater willingness to listen to the teacher
- a view of the student as an individual/a social being
- a view of the teacher as an individual/a social being
- the teacher's willingness to make allowances for the student
- the student's willingness to make allowances for the teacher
- the teacher's willingness to try harder and be more flexible
- the student's willingness to try harder and be more flexible

We might add to this, a greater desire to please on both sides, and for teachers a greater investment in the success of their students.

What is perhaps most worrying in both tables is the low priority accorded to 'understanding and engagement'. After all, this might easily be claimed as the most important single aim of education. The explanations for its low ranking may be outlined as follows:

In a priority list there are always things rated lower than others, not because they are **not** important but because they are either less important, less obvious, less measurable, or less achievable. Perhaps for this reason school ethos and attitudes to school are also rated low, because they may be too ambitious and diffuse a goal for something as immediate and limited as a two hour after-school class. It is perhaps of more concern that self-assessment should sit at the bottom of the list, given that this is a critical aspect of learning for yourself.

But has it all paid off in raised achievement in subject and in examinations? Is there tangible evidence of this?

While the answer to this is an unequivocal 'yes', it is a more difficult question to answer than it at first appears.

Supported study schools were asked to provide Standard Grade results in 1992
for those a) who had participated in supported study on a regular basis over the last year b) who had attended on a spasmodic basis and c) a matching sample of those who hadn't attended at all.

In some schools the sample was very small and it was difficult to draw conclusions. However, there seemed to be a general trend among all schools for students who attended supported study to do better at Standard Grade than a matched sample who didn't attend. Compare, for example, results from one school - Bellshill Academy:

A rough guide to performance was obtained by adding overall grades in each subject and averaging out over all subjects taken at Standard Grade. The following table compares young people from families living in APTs and targeted as priority for supported study, and attending (regularly and spasmodically) and not attending supported study at all.

(In reading the following table bear in mind that a score of 1 would be the top possible score at Standard Grade 'Credit' level, a score of 3-4 representing a good 'General' level pass, while a score of 5-6 would be a pass at 'Foundation' level)

	non-attenders	spasmodic attenders	regular attenders
no. of pupils	25	15	10
average grade achieved	5.37	3.84	3.47

In addition to this the school examined a 'control' group who were not targeted because they did not live in APTs, but attended supported study nonetheless. The results for this group were as follows:

	non-attenders	spasmodic attenders	regular attenders
no. of pupils	43	14	14
average grade achieved	5.42	3.75	3.77

As with the first group those from non-APT backgrounds who attended supported study did significantly better at Standard Grade than those who didn't. The APT group of regular attenders also did as well as the non-APT regular attenders group, a finding paralleled in Cardinal Newham, the neighbouring denominational school in Bellshill.
As with the first group those from non-APT backgrounds attending supported study did significantly better at Standard Grade.

What does this mean if these differences are valid and reliable? It means essentially one of two things. Either those who were going to do well anyway were those who attended supported study, or attending supported study adds significantly to your likelihood of success at Standard Grade.

The truth appears to be an amalgam of both. Young people who attended supported study probably tended to be more motivated, but that does not tell the whole story, and the conclusion is inescapable that there is 'added value' being gained through attendance at supported study.

This hypothesis may be tested further by examining a whole fourth year cohort of 64 students from Doon Academy. From 1990 all students at the school have been presented at Standard Grade in all modes. Their performance was as follows:

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	no award	no. of students
Regular	13	54	57	64	40	13	1	2	35
Spasmodic	3	7	17	28	23	7	1	5	13
Non-attender	0	7	14	32	27	8	2	20	16

When Standard Grade results by individual subject are examined it shows a consistent improvement overall, with dramatic improvement in some subjects in particular (even allowing for non-attenders included in the statistics).

% of students gaining grades 1-4 at Standard Grade

	1990	1991	1992
English	72	82	80
Maths	39	50	62
Science	36	50	76
Social Subjects	20	40	52
Creative/Aesthetic	51	62	70
Technology	41	54	58

Although there are other factors to be taken into account in the equation, it is acknowledged within subject departments that supported study is a significant factor in students' raised achievement.

The results from these two schools are not exceptional in terms of schools with supported study schemes. In all schools with schemes operating there is evidence of unforeseen gains, in some individual cases quite dramatic.

As a gauge to 'added value' we also took two samples of students and compared their Higher Grade with their Standard Grade results. Because of the small numbers involved in each school (usually less than 10) this was less conclusive, and although it suggests value being added it would be unwise to make any claims for the differences that emerged.

A more subjective approach was to look at the cases of individuals who, in the judgement of teachers and headteachers, had seemed incapable of good Higher passes, and yet had defied those predictions. Most schools were able to cite examples of students who fell into that category and who had exceeded all expectations.

> *"J. has improved beyond anything that anyone thought remotely possible. She was strongly advised not to take some subjects, like Physics in which she was hopeless. We thought she was a scatterbrain who would never get her act together. She had done nothing in three and a half years at the school and ran around with the most unruly crew. But despite all that she was a regular at study classes, ...plugged away. Nobody can believe how well she's done. They think it's a bloody miracle."*

One school with a subject-based tutorial system found quite marked increases by some students in subjects which they had not attended. For example, a student who had attended Maths supported study did significantly better than she or anyone else expected in English. The co-ordinator's interpretation was that her improved English was a result of an attitude change to school work in general and a growth in self-confidence.

Of course, if supported study is primarily about developing self-confidence and approaches to study it should be no surprise that the way to better marks in English is to study Maths! After all there is already some evidence that more time on P.E. is also likely to benefit Mathematics and English because it increases learning potential and mental/phyical disposition. The same principle may well be operating in the supported study context too.

CHAPTER 11

THE FUTURE OF SUPPORTED STUDY

Is supported study viable in the longer term or is it a passing fad? Even if everyone agrees it is a good thing is there the political will or an economic base for its continuation?

The future of supported study may be considered at three levels - the level of the authority, the level of the school, and the level of the study centre itself.

1. The Region

The Regional authority has already made supported study an important priority and has not just funded schools for staffing and resources, but has invested a great deal of time and energy of officers, advisers, members, and headteachers in sustaining the initiative.

The project began very much in the spirit of a pilot without mainstream funding and with selected schools being given quite generous resourcing to try and make it work. By the second year it had become obvious that some equally deserving schools felt left out, and at least one highly deserving school, Auchenharvie Academy in Saltcoats, had run its own scheme on a voluntary basis.

It was incumbent on the authority to extend the scheme and, therefore, to spread the resources more thinly. In the third year of the scheme schools were required to do a slimming down exercise and to look for where cuts could be made. Ultimately fairness, and Regional policy, would seem to require that young people who are without support for learning out of school are provided with that support.

The Region's "Social Strategy for the Nineties", recently published, continues the policy of identifying need on a geographical basis and in terms of vulnerable groups. It holds to its policy of differentiating the distribution of resources to favour those schools where children and young people are demonstrably on an unequal footing socially and economically.

Setting supported study within the Social Strategy framework does raise some issues for individual children and families. The Social Strategy is primarily an anti-poverty strategy, and the basis on which resources are distributed leaves some individual children and families untouched. This is relevant to borderline poverty areas, that is, deprived areas which are not quite deprived enough to merit extra resources. It is also relevant to such children who are in schools in fairly prosperous areas, either because the school has a very small incidence of deprivation within its catchment, or because young people are there through placing requests.

We might go further, though, to consider young people who do not suffer deprivation in any material sense but who are starved of care and support by parents who are too preoccupied, too stressed, too ill, or too busy to think of their children's welfare.

Some schools in more prosperous areas are giving thought to the relevance of supported study, and in the course of this research the question of charging parents for after school classes has been raised in a primary and a secondary school. Some schools are already offering after-school leisure activities run by the School Board on a paying basis and see a niche there for homework classes.

Taking a longer view, the message to schools from the Region will have to be that their success rests on the question of how effectively they can support in, and out of, school learning for young people whose need is greatest. In an increasingly stringent and competitive economic climate they will also have to demonstrate how well they are doing that, in a way that has never been demanded of schools before. As more management responsibility is devolved to schools the demand for stewardship and accountability will increase.

This will mean that the Region takes a less directive role, and schools will have to consider, within their overall budget, just what kind of priority they give to supported study and how that might best be funded. It might imply something more radical than classes after school for a minority, but it will imply some creative thinking about how staffing and resources are prioritised.

The Region also has a policy for 'Young People in Trouble'. So far there is not much evidence of the relationship between that policy and supported study. Yet there are interesting leads into it. In Doon Academy, St. Convals and Auchinleck Academy workers from the Youth Information Project are present during evening sessions and available to young people on a self-referral basis.

It has proved to be a very effective way of getting in touch with young people who have serious personal and domestic problems or need vocational guidance. It is much more effective, for example, than expecting young people to enter an office staffed by anonymous people behind desks. In cost-effectiveness terms it is a very cheap alternative and one which all schools might seriously consider funding, or part funding, as a part of the personal and social education which they seek to deliver to young people. However, as the "Social Strategy" and "Young People in Trouble" initiatives are premised on a multi-agency approach, it is important that such initiatives are looked at closely in cost-benefit terms by Social Work, Community Education, and the Chief Executive as well as by Education. These bodies too must consider the funding implications if further progress is to be made.

In terms of broadening the concept of supported study there are initiatives elsewhere in Britain that merit a closer look. For example, in Bradford the Youth and Community Service are closely involved in study support, and indeed have been the impetus for developments in schools and community centres. In some schools the model is very similar to Strathclyde with classes from 4.00 till 6.00. However, they also offer alternative venues in community centres which are open in the evenings and on Saturdays. In Strathclyde Sunday might be a popular option as that is the time many young people do most of their homework anyway.

In Bradford the Youth and Community Service see study support as a vehicle which they can use for a number of different ends and in a range of contexts. For example, in work with young offenders supported study sessions are run by youth workers in community centres, and aimed at supporting young people in their wider personal and social development and and helping them in building their self-confidence and self-belief.

The volunteer tutor approach as used in Dunbarton has potential for further development. The 'Pimlico model' of using university students as tutors has worked well in London and in Bradford. In Bradford tutors are paid £4.50 an hour but many are willing to work for the benefit of the experience or for the valuable addition to their C.V., particularly if they are going into teaching. There is currently a waiting list of 80 students.

One way forward is to tap the very large pool of help that is in the colleges of education and university faculties of Education. Strathclyde Region encompasses three university faculties of Education (Paisley, Glasgow and Strathclyde) and one College (St. Andrew's). In the Faculty of Education at Jordanhill alone there are over one thousand students in pre-service teacher education. They could be offered credit in course work for working with a group of young people over a given period. For the student it would be valuable pre-service experience. For the Region and schools it would provide a pool of expertise for teachers entering Regional employment.

The particular needs of some young people in minority ethnic communities has not yet been adequately addressed in Strathclyde. This is, in part, because the funding for schools in areas of acutest poverty bypasses inner-city areas such as Woodside, Garnethill, Pollockshields, and Govanhill where there are large Asian and Chinese communities. Experience with study support in London and Bradford suggests that there is a very specific need, and that there are imaginative ways of meeting that need, either through classes in community centres or in schools. Girls only weekends at Tom Hood School in London, and girls only and boys only sessions in Bradford have enabled some young people to participate and to overcome the reservations, or strictures, of their parents.

Another issue at Regional level is staff development. Perhaps the strongest unanticipated outcome of the exercise has been the satisfaction and the opportunities for personal growth afforded to teachers. It has brought into sharp focus the different needs and learning styles of individual children, and illuminated some of the limitations of classroom work and homework.

There has been some valuable in-service within divisions, and conferences/workshops at Regional level. The networking and information exchange from these has been most useful, but they have, so far, only reached a minority of teachers. The benefits of extending this will not lie simply in making supported study more effective, but in the wider professional development and classroom approach of teachers.

2. Schools. Costing the exercise

Schools involved in the project have all been positive and wish to continue with supported study. What they do in the future will have to recognise that the pilot phase is over and that decisions made will have to be made in the light of all the other school priorities and demands on funding. This will becoming increasingly acute as schools move towards devolved management.

The significant costs involved in running supported study lie in staffing, school letting and resources. To this may be added staff development, or training, of teachers and/or other volunteers.

Costs vary considerably along a number of dimensions:

- number of weeks in a year
- number of openings per week
- hours per night
- number of paid staff per night
- resources used

The schools who were in the first wave of funding benefited from the pilot nature of the exercise and the available pool of money being shared among a relatively small number.

As more and more schools were brought into the exercise the available Regional money for each school was inevitably less. Schools already in the scheme had to start making some hard-headed decisions. There were obvious targets for money-saving - reduce the number of hours, evenings, or weeks in the year; cut out the snacks; reduce the number of staff.

While this was not welcomed by staff in schools, and felt to them like Regional cutbacks, there were benefits too. Schools had to start taking a closer look at value-for-money issues and devise more effective ways of deploying teachers

Most supported study schemes started as a good idea more or less tacked on at the end of the school day. The experience of the last two years has raised a number of fundamental questions about the relationship of such schemes to the life of the school as a whole. In terms of teaching and learning there are two areas in particular on which supported study has focused attention. One is classwork and the other is homework, in other words, learning in and out of school.

Most schools involved in supported study have taken a harder more critical look at their homework policies and practice. It has served to raise the priority status of homework as matter of concern, but more fundamentally to focus on the quality of work that pupils do in their own time.

Homework and study are essentially individual activities, even when pursued socially within a group. They are differentiated in the sense that an individual pupil works through them in his/her own time and pace and with help at points where he or she seeks it. They have many of the salient characteristics of effective learning and raise the question : 'Why can't classroom work be more like this more of the time?'

In other words, supported study raises pupils' expectations of the quality of work and the quality of attention they can get from teachers. Pupils recognise and adapt to the boundaries that schools create and are able to compartmentalise things with amazing facility, but the question remains : "Is there, or can there be, a useful carry over from after school to in-school activities?"

Whether organised as homework or study classes they make much more visible the quantity and quality of homework being assigned. Maths, English, and Art teachers are exposed to History and Geography homework and sometimes asked to help pupils interpret and complete it. There are probably few stiffer quality control mechanisms.

What also becomes clear from this exercise is the extent of overlap and reduplication from subject to subject. Students may be doing very similar things for Office and

Information Studies and Computing, for Maths and Science, or for Modern Studies and English.

A number of schools involved have now put the development of a homework policy, or redevelopment of a homework policy, at the top of their priority list.

These issues have a direct bearing on school priorities and school development planning. It is hard to conceive of higher priorities than the quality of classroom work and its relationship to students' progress towards ownership of their own learning. In this respect the implications for school development planning are unambiguous.

School development planning is about prioritisation, setting targets, and costing those priorities and targets. If supported study and homework policies are as important as this study suggests then they must be planned and costed as an integral aspect of each school's development plan. It is possible for supported study to move from the periphery to the hub of school life, used by all teachers who see it as a mechanism through which young people's learning is enriched and extended. The centre may be, as in one or two English schools, open before, during, and after school. Lunchtimes are a valuable time to capture a future clientele.

If there is a supported study student management group, and/or student evaluation, they may have an important contribution to make to the development planning process.

As schools become responsible for more of their own planning and budgeting they will also have to look more creatively at new and different ways of supporting student study. Saturday, weekend, or summer schools are options to be looked at. Doon Academy has already run successful residential weeks and Auchinleck is about to run its first residential weekend. Residential stays are not cheap but they may, as the experience of Tom Hood School in London suggests, be as cost-effective an option as regular weekly classes. There staff volunteer on an unpaid basis because they get so much out of it themselves.

3. Issues for Supported Study Centres

There are also shorter term issues at the micro level, that is, within the workings of the supported study centre itself. They are issues which also have long-term implications.

In reply to a questionnaire sent out prior to the second supported study conference in Glasgow teachers involved in Regional schemes made 16 different kinds of comments about priorities for the future. Issues receiving frequent mentions were:

- the need for better homework policies
- the need to convince parents of the value of supported study
- need to link study skills to supported study
- extension of the project to younger pupils
- targeting of pupils

Other issues mentioned included:

- how to sustain funding
- involvement of more adults (as learners and helpers)
- need for contracts
- persuading less academically inclined pupils to attend
- exchange of materials among schools

From this list there are clearly some areas in which supported study has made little ground and in which there is surely potential for the future.

One area certainly worth examining is that of contracts. Some schools are using them to good effect and while they have no legal validity, they do require at least some thought and an act of positive commitment. A contract defining supported study as a partnership between student and school may be helpful in other ways too. It would specify:

- what the purpose of the supported study is
- what the expectations of the student's attendance and behaviour are
- what the student has a right to expect from teachers and from other students

The following are some of the key questions that need to be addressed by those managing or co-ordinating supported study centres:

1. ***How aware are students of the aims of supported study?***

   It is not always apparent that students themselves are thinking through why they are there and what the broader purposes are. Do they believe this is just about getting your homework done or are they encouraged to discuss wider purposes and lifelong gains?

2. ***To what extent are students involved in monitoring and assessing their own progress and development of skills?***

   If students are aware of wider purposes they should also be aware of their rate of progress in subjects, in their general approach to work, and in their development of study skills.

3. ***Is there any evidence that students are developing strategies for, and habits of, self study?***

   If students are to be helped to be more self aware and self critical, teachers need to have some feeling for how each individual student is progressing, and some record or profile for that student, however brief.

4. ***Is there evidence that students are using taught techniques in their approach to their work across the curriculum?***

   Most schemes offer students certain techniques for study, whether on a systematic basis or on an individualised ad hoc basis. Is there any systematic follow up to this and reinforcement for students so that they became really integrated into the way a student approaches work in and out of school? (often referred to as a 'metacognitive strategies')

5. ***How much sharing and discussion is there among staff of purposes, priorities, and procedures?***

   If there is to be a systematic approach to the development of study skills and a sharing with students of those ideas, staff need to discuss these things as a team and ensure that there is, among them, a shared understanding and shared values. It is useful for the tutor team to have a framework or reference point of indicators, or success criteria.

6. ***What is the nature of the contract with pupils?***

   Is there room for a more flexible arrangement for individuals or groups of students? For example, do S1/2 require to contract in for the same length of time as older students? If it risks an erosion of the commitment are there useful alternatives for them which are not just time-serving? There may be important lessons to be learned from the Waverley experience of 5-a-side football as an incentive and a counterbalance to work. Could it, if organised properly, be construed as P.E. homework?

7. *What is 'Study'?*

Often study seems to imply sitting at a desk filling out a sheet or writing? Is it too paper and pencil dominated? Could students be involved in a wider range of activities which are also seen as 'study'. The primary school experience may suggest some ideas for a wider approach.

8. *Is there a need to experiment more with leisure and recreational opportunities?*

Three schools at least have combined leisure facilities successfully with supported study. This may assume more importance if free snacks are withdrawn. If supported study is about lifelong skills and habits there are important lessons to be learned about the balance between recreation and study, and the management of personal time.

9. *Are there alternative approaches to the less cost-effective and unpredictable subject-based seminars?*

There may be mileage in experimenting with occasional well-advertised and subscribed special events such as mini conferences or workshops. Residential weekends and Saturday schools may be other possibilities worth trying. Given that staff are already present in schools for supported study sessions the possibility of phone-in surgeries might also be explored.

10. *Are parents aware of the purposes of supported study? and of its successes?*

The place of parents is clearly critical, since the whole initiative starts from the possibilities of support within the home. If students', and parents', accounts are to be accepted, most parents are concerned and supportive. They just don't know how to be most helpful, and are often unconsciously undermining or destructive. There is clearly potential for greater support from parents, and guidance from the school with regard to how they support their children's learning at home and in school.

11. *Has the scope for volunteers and parental involvement been adequately explored?*

Cuts in budgets are one way of concentrating the mind, and some schools have now looked more seriously at parental volunteers, or parents being involved on a paying basis but at a rate much lower than teachers (for example £4.50 an hour). The experience of Edinbarnet with volunteer tutors offers another option, and the use of college and university students, especially teachers in pre-service, as in Auchinleck Academy, offers another seam still to be mined.

Paired Reading and Paired Maths, which provide a structured format for parents to work with their children, offer models which can help parents of secondary as well as of primary children. These schemes may also be used with senior students tutoring younger ones, or for peer learning and tutoring.

12. Has the potential of peer learning and teaching been fully explored?

In most schemes young people learn from, and teach, each other. Typically, though, this is incidental and unplanned. There may be more scope for examining how this can be carried through more systematically, making students themselves more aware of how they can use, and benefit from, a 'peer pedagogy'.

Senior students can also have a role in helping younger students. The experience in Auchinleck and elsewhere has shown the benefits to older, as well as to younger, students from this kind of big brother/sister operation. Should they be recompensed for their commitment? Are there ways of repaying senior students, in kind or in cash, through special awards or grants?

13 Should some students be excluded?

The issue of behavioural problems has arisen in some schools. In supported study sessions it is relatively easy to deal with. Students are simply excluded. However, sometimes students are badly behaved in the school itself or on buses on the way home from supported study. Some badly behaved students are motivated to attend after school study and do well there. Should they be excluded from supported study on the basis of what they do elsewhere, or should they be given this opportunity to get back on the rails ?

14 . Is it useful to have a student council or sounding board?

The involvement of students themselves in the management of the centre is worth exploring further. They are not only a source of ideas, evaluation, and marketing but they can be valuable allies if they have a commitment to the success of the centre. The above mentioned issue of behaviour is one that students themselves could have a useful say in, and responsibility for.

15. Should adult learners (or learner/helpers) be included?

In Strathclyde adult learners are conspicuously absent at supported study schemes although sometimes present in large number at day classes. Is there scope for including them on a similar basis to day classes? Are they not included in some cases because nobody has really made any effort in that direction, or because there are reservations such as:

1. In the competition for resources will they reduce opportunities for pupils?
2. Might they adversely affect the dynamic and attraction of supported study? There should be fewer reservations, though, about the inclusion of adults in a helping capacity. Yet again it is an area in which few inroads have been made.

IN SUMMARY

All the evidence suggests that supported study has been a highly successful initiative, in some cases quite dramatic in its effects on the lives of young people, families, and teachers, and even schools.

It is perhaps not surprising that providing support for young people to study should result in better achievement. Yet the consistency of better results across participating schools has come as a surprise to many teachers and headteachers as well as to young people themselves. Is this because there is a deeply rooted belief that some young people will never do well at school work and that school for them is mainly about marking time? Many Scottish young people have learned to believe that, and have taken on a self-description of being 'thick'.

Supported study at its best has shown a way out of this self-fulfilling prophecy. The key to its success lies in building a different self-image and a different set of expectations of self. However, the few hours a week spent in a supportive climate is not enough to undo the environmental damage, and the self-confidence that begins to build in that safe haven has to be sustained in the day-to-day work of classrooms, among peers in the playground, and at home with parents.

Parents play a critical role. They can support or undermine growth and progress. The evidence suggests that when they undermine their children's confidence and progress it is not malicious or negligent but because they are uninformed, or ill-informed, about how to help their children. There is plenty of good practice around to demonstrate how schools can work with parents, and, significantly, some of that good practice comes directly from supported study schemes.

It also has to be acknowledged that some young people live in disorganised and even pathological families or households. While this is not as large a group as some mythologies of deprivation would hold, it does imply a very special form of support for vulnerable and disturbed young people who rely wholly on the school for their education, and for whom the school is the only avenue to a better future. Supported study, with its more pupil-centred philosophy, with its heightened awareness and openness to young people's lives has something significant to offer them too.

QIE

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> *"He just did it off his own back. He never even told me at first then he says he is doing this homework class at the school. This is a wee boy, mind, who wouldn't pick up a book and sat wi' his face stuck in the telly. We think it's great but we cannae believe it."*
>
> *(parent)*

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